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LORDS AND COMMONS.

EVERY nation must have a government of some kind, and the persons who govern must in some way or other be chosen. The method of choice has been the fundamental problem of politics in all ages. What method is best has never been definitely settled; and there are special reasons why the question should be specially considered at the present time. The rulers of England are chosen in four distinctly different ways: the Sovereign, by seniority of birth in one royal family; the House of Lords, partly by inheritance and partly by a very complex system of personal selection; the House of Commons, by the majorities of voters grouped in certain constituencies; the Ministers, by the party leaders of the day, controlled more or less by parliamentary majorities and the pleasure of the sovereign.

Which method of selection is right? Which is best? Is there a "right" or a "best" in the matter? The democratic, and doubtless the most common, opinion is that the right and best method is that of popular election in which the choice is settled by the majority of votes. The modern Radical would apply this method to the whole machinery of government, and no political question can be of greater interest; for we all feel that, whether we like it or not, the government of England must become more and not less democratic in the coming years.

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What is it then that we really get by this method of choice? Is it wholly satisfactory? Is it sufficient in itself? Are there any serious defects in it, and if there are, what are the remedies? The House of Commons consists of six hundred and seventy men who have been chosen in this way; the House of Lords of about five hundred, not one of whom has been thus chosen. Yet it is impossible to say that the members of the House of Commons are individually better fitted to be legislators than the members of the House of Lords. Both houses contain a small number of the ablest men in the country, a large number of men of average ability, and a certain residue of fools. On most questions the debates in the House of Lords are as intelligent as in the House of Commons. On great questions they are often of a higher order. There is less rhetoric, less repetition, far less vulgarity and personal abuse. The facts of the case are generally stated briefly and clearly by the leaders on either side. Their merits are discussed in a few well-considered speeches. There are no obstructive tactics, and one or two divisions settle the matter so far as the Peers are concerned. And most matters are settled in the same way by both Houses. The Lords make many amendments in the acts brought before them, but most of their amendments are agreed to by the Commons,

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and the cases are very few in which the difference of opinion is so great that no agreement can be reached. Every Act of Parliament that has ever been passed has had the assent of the House of Lords, and every session produces a crop of acts affecting all the chief interests of the nation.

How is it that this is possible? How does it come to pass that methods of choice so entirely different produce two bodies of men so much alike in personal fitness, and so seldom in serious conflict about their legislative work?

Now to begin with, there is an almost universal misconception as to what it is possible to get by the method of popular election. In theory every member of the House of Commons is supposed to have been selected by the free choice of the majority of voters in his constituency as the one man most fit to represent them; but in practice it is a very different affair. The actual facts are these: in each constituency a small number of active politicians, who have the inclination and can spare the time, join together as a working committee to manage the election on behalf of the political party they themselves belong to. These committees choose the candidates, often under the advice of their central party organisers. There are no definite principles on which the choice is made, except that the following things are essential: the candidate must belong to the political party of the selectors; he must be willing to serve, and, if needful, to contest the election; he must be able to afford it, or have friends who are able; and he must be a person who is, or is likely to make himself, popular in the constituency. But neither mental, moral, nor any other excellence, is included in these essentials, except so far as it may assist in making him popular. And as popularity is chiefly gained by outward acts and not by any knowledge of a man's real character or ability, character and ability become

in fact the least essential things in the general grounds of selection. If any strong political partisan who is liberal with his time and money makes it known that he wishes to go into Parliament, he has always a good chance of getting selected as a candidate without further qualification, if nothing is known about him that renders him unpopular. Choice by election in the House of Commons, therefore, is generally nothing better than the choice of one individual out of two who have previously been chosen in this manner as candidates by two political committees.

But it is not even as much as this. Real choice implies a rational comparison and an intelligent preference, and though great numbers of the electors of course make this comparison and arrive intelligently at an honest preference, there are also great numbers in every constituency who take little interest in the matter; who have no solid reason for any choice, would never vote at all if left to themselves, or would vote either way for five shillings if they were allowed to do so. And it is these voters who determine the result whenever the earnest electors on either side are pretty evenly balanced.

The main object of the whole machinery of an election is to get the votes of these indifferent electors, each party doing its utmost for this end. Very little attention is paid to the intelligent part of the electorate; they can be trusted to take the trouble to go to the poll and to vote according to their convictions. But if either party can by any means get hold of a large majority of the unintelligent who would not vote of their own accord, they can carry almost any election. Hence the overwhelming practical importance of electoral organisation. These votes can only be got by immense effort and the use of every possible inducement, and if either party has a much better system, or a local cry that will turn the scale in the minds of the

least intelligent, they are certain of victory unless the majority of the earnest voters is very large on the other side. So it comes to pass, as everybody knows to be the fact, that a considerable number of the members of the House of Commons owe their seats to the votes of those whose political judgment is of no value, and who neither know nor care anything about the candidate's personal fitness to be a member of the legislature.

And the most intelligent voter, instead of being at liberty to vote for the person he himself would choose, finds that the choice is already made for him, that he must take it or leave it, and that what he can vote for is only a man selected by the local leaders of his party. Thus it is finally the support of parties, and not the selection of persons, that is the chief thing thought of in popular elections; and it follows of course that personal fitness in the men selected is not the general result of this method of choice. No man is ever sent to the House of Commons merely because he is specially fitted for the work of wise legislation. Nor does the democratic idea of government call for special wisdom in the persons chosen. They are thought of chiefly as delegates sent to Parliament to carry out the wishes of the majorities that sent them there, and if they will vote for certain things desired by those majorities, the majorities are satisfied.

Now we are not condemning this method of choice, and it would be ridiculous to suggest that it should be abandoned. In the case of the House of Commons it is the only possible method. It is a necessary part of modern national life. But like all other human methods of choice it has defects of a most serious kind, defects which are inherent in its nature, which cannot be got rid of, and for which therefore it is necessary to find remedies in some other way.

For the idea of government by mere delegates, who have simply to do what their constituents have decided upon,

is of course a practical absurdity. Their constituents have definite wishes on a few points only, while the simplest Act of Parliament, besides its main principle, generally involves a mass of details which the members of the House of Commons can settle only by their own personal judgment; and this applies equally to the greater part of the whole business of government. The personal fitness of the men is never therefore a matter of indifference, as that of mere delegates might be, but a matter which affects every legislative act, and nothing is more certain than that any body of men chosen, as popular election necessarily chooses, will fall into many grievous errors of judgment if there be no correcting power. All nations feel this instinctively, and every modern constitutional government possesses, besides its chief legislative assembly, a second chamber whose principal business is to revise the acts and correct the errors of the first. In all affairs committed to the judgment of men the necessity of a right of appeal from first decisions is recognised everywhere; but how to choose a second chamber which shall answer its purpose satisfactorily is one of the most difficult of political problems. Obviously it will be of no use if both houses are chosen by the same method. They will have similar defects, and will repeat each other's errors instead of correcting them. Accordingly in every State a different method is provided in choosing the second chamber. The details of appointment to the various senates differ greatly, but they all resolve themselves into one of two things. Either the persons chosen must belong to a small specified class, or a few selected individuals must choose them. In most cases both of these methods are combined; and it is not clear that there are any other methods available, except that of pure chance, such as casting lots.

Now each of these methods is good in its way, and each of course has its own attendant drawbacks. If you can find a class of men, most of

whom are fitted for the purpose, the manner of selecting among them is of no great consequence because the choice cannot fall on many who are not fitted. This in other matters is the strong part of competitive examinations and of academic degrees. Those who pass the examinations or obtain the degrees constitute special groups of men, all of whom are fairly competent to do certain things. Any qualified physician may be trusted with the care of a patient. Any youth who has obtained a certain number of marks is competent to take a civil appointment. You never learn in this way who are *most* fitted, but you exclude those who are not fit at all. The restricted classes from whom senators are chosen are sometimes the possessors of a certain amount of wealth, sometimes the holders of certain offices in the State, sometimes the hereditary nobility. The wealthy are generally cautious in dealing with property; the holders of office have generally given proof of ability; the hereditary nobles are generally attached to existing institutions and opposed to hasty change. All these qualities are required in a senate. The popular House is always in danger of being reckless in dealing with property and impatient in desiring change, and real ability in its members is not secured by its method of choice. On the other hand, rich men, though cautious, are not necessarily wise: able politicians often use their ability for selfish ends; and hereditary nobles often resist change when it is wrong to do so.

When senators are appointed not out of selected classes but by selected individuals, these are sometimes the sovereign, sometimes small electoral bodies chosen by local councils, who have themselves been elected chiefly for other purposes. A sovereign is of course controlled by his ministers, by public opinion, and by traditional usage, and does not often appoint men who are unfit to be senators. The machinery of indirect election

prevents the choice from being the result of hasty impulse, as in popular contests, but has in other respects most of the defects of that method of choice.

The senates thus appointed are felt to be essential parts of constitutional government, and they act everywhere in the same way as a revising and restraining power in the State.

But the British House of Peers stands conspicuously at the head of all existing senates, equally as to the time it has endured, the services it has rendered, the influence it possesses, and the characteristics of its leading men. What then is this House of Peers? How is it chosen, and what is the real result?

Nominally there are about five hundred and sixty members of the House of Lords, but four hundred and sixty is the largest number who have ever voted in a division. Of these about one hundred and twenty, including the archbishops and bishops, have not inherited their titles, but are peers created during the present reign. They have all been chosen by the Queen and her advisers as persons who have in some way greatly distinguished themselves above their fellows, generally by service to the State or by great eminence in some profession, art, or business. Most of them are wealthy, because a peerage is a burden to a man with insufficient means, and in a few cases great accumulated wealth has been their leading qualification, but only when combined with great social influence. These one hundred and twenty peers therefore are men who have shown themselves to be above the average in ability of various kinds. In this respect they are superior to the majority of the House of Commons, who are never above the average; and they represent very fairly the general feelings and opinions of able, successful, experienced, and wealthy men. About two hundred and fifty peers are the sons, grandsons, or other direct descendants of men who have been raised to the peerage for the

same reasons during the present century. They therefore represent the views of the newer nobility. Sixteen Scotch and twenty-eight Irish peers are elected as members of the House of Lords by the Scotch and Irish nobles. These therefore are selected members out of a small and special class. The rest, about one hundred and fifty, belong to the old historic families of the English nobles, in whom the peerage has been hereditary for many generations.

This complex structure of the House of Lords renders it more fully representative of the upper and wealthier classes than any method of election could possibly do. Its members are selected not in one way only but in several ways: by long established inheritance; by inheritance newly created; by the highest official selection among the most distinguished commoners; by eminence in the Church; by the choice of the Scotch and Irish nobility. And it is from the upper and wealthier classes that every senate must be chosen, if it is to fulfil its proper functions as a more cautious and less impatient body than the popular branch of the legislature. All this is secured in the House of Lords by the methods of choice. The result of any method depends on the whole of the conditions under which it operates, and not upon any single one. The result of popular election does not depend wholly or chiefly on the number of persons who actually wish for the same thing; nor does the result of inheritance depend alone on the chance of what sort of child may be born an eldest son. Much of what the eldest son of a peer will become when he is a man is determined by the fact that he is the eldest son and will be brought up with the knowledge of his future inheritance always before him, with the training that custom requires, and in the society of a special class. The opinions prevailing in that society will in the main be his opinions, and they will almost always be conservative in their tendency, because the

special interests of that class are settled and permanent, and the value of what is settled and permanent is constantly before his eyes. But a senate whose tendencies are not conservative is a useless body, as useless as a railway-break with no pressure on the wheels; and hereditary rank, by ensuring this general tendency, ensures the first requirement in a second chamber.

The real effect of hereditary rank can be known only by its results. It is useless to theorise about it; the facts only are of value. There are always in the House of Lords as many first-rate statesmen as are ever found in the House of Commons, and instead of being only among newly-created peers they are especially numerous in the families of the old nobility. Such names as Salisbury, Devonshire, Argyll, Rosebery, Lansdowne, Spencer, Norfolk, Rutland, Lothian, Aberdeen, are only prominent examples. How many other groups of a hundred and fifty men contain ten names equally illustrious? Has the House of Commons fifty such, as it ought to have in proportion to its numbers? We know that it never has, and the fact that personal fitness for the work of government is secured at least as much by the method of inheritance as by the method of popular election is demonstrated before our eyes.

Personal fitness, however, though of vast importance in itself, is not the only thing needed in the rulers of a great nation. A knowledge of the wants and wishes, of the interests, pleasures, trials, and grievances of all classes of persons is necessary as far as it is possible to obtain it, and it is chiefly to be obtained by the method of popular election. It is to the House of Commons that we look for the initiative in all important changes. It is chiefly by the promise of change to those who are not content with things as they are that the members of that House obtain the votes by which they are elected, and it is the discontent of their constituencies with

something in their lot that is the mainspring of legislative activity; but it is at the same time the constant cause of impatient haste and short-sighted experiments, and to know what the contented classes think of the proposed changes is essential to their proper consideration. The House of Lords represents the contented classes; it represents those who have already obtained what all the rest are struggling after, and therefore what all the rest would wish for if their desires could be satisfied.

The idea that the House of Lords is not a representative body is one of those commonplace mistakes which do considerable harm in politics and are due partly to a misuse of words, and partly to wilful misrepresentation by partisan leaders.

"A person or body may be truly representative without being elected by those whom they represent," wrote Charles Kingsley in one of his wisest letters. A true "representative" is one who, acting on behalf of others, knows their wishes, and tries to carry them out. So far as he does this, an elected member "represents" those who voted for him, but not those who voted the other way. If these are represented at all in the House of Commons it is by the members of other constituencies for whom they have not voted, but who agree with them in their political views. Choice by election does not make a man more "representative" of those he agrees with than he would otherwise be; it only determines which man is to act this part in the House of Commons. The catch-words of politics, such as "no taxation without representation," only illustrate the very loose and imperfect way in which any words that seem to support theories are used in public life. Everybody is taxed, but only majorities are "represented," if a representative must be an elected person. The real political truth at the bottom of this phrase is that those who levy taxes should be persons who pay them, and not persons who do not pay them. Any one who

pays them "represents" all who do so, in so far as they have a common interest in the matter, and therefore a member elected by a majority of taxpayers "represents," on the taxing question, also the minority who voted against him, not because they elected him (they did not) but because he is a taxpayer himself. The House of Peers "represents" the upper and wealthier classes even more perfectly than the rest of the nation is represented in the House of Commons. They have a full knowledge of the wishes of those classes, and they act in accordance with them.

The history of the House of Lords is strangely misread by impatient democrats. We owe to them the general stability of British legislation, the certainty that no important change can be made in haste or without full discussion by the cautious as well as the incautious classes. The power of the Peers is only a suspensory power and has never been used as anything else. They cannot prevent the nation from doing anything that a real majority are firmly resolved to do after they have listened to all that can be said against it; but they can compel them to listen, and to take sufficient time for final judgment, and this is the great function of a senate in every State. They have done their duty in this respect more perfectly than any other senate. Great changes have never been accepted by the House of Lords till the national resolve to have them became undoubted, and they have never afterwards been resisted. But though in such circumstances the Peers necessarily yield, it does not follow that their objections are unsound. They have often been wiser than the nation in their forecast of results, and never more distinctly so than in the two most conspicuous changes of modern times, the abolition of protective duties, beginning with the repeal of the Corn Laws, and the great extension of the parliamentary franchise. In both these cases the Peers foresaw what ardent

reformers never see, that all great changes do harm as well as good, and that the injury to be feared deserves as much consideration as the benefit to be hoped for. Whatever benefit the nation as a whole may have derived from the first of these changes, it has ruined British agriculture as a profitable industry and has made England absolutely dependent on foreign countries for her daily bread. The Peers foresaw that this was probable, and they were right: the reformers denied it, and they were wrong; and it is certain that if that denial had not been believed by the nation generally the repeal of the Corn Laws would at least have taken a different form.

The extension of the franchise, till the least intelligent, the least educated, and the poorest classes have the absolute power of electing every member of the House of Commons if they only knew how to use it, has probably been the unavoidable issue of the circumstances of the age, but it need not have come so soon. The Lords foresaw its dangers, and were more than justified in delaying it to the utmost of their power, because every year's delay increases the comparative numbers of the educated and intelligent. And however unavoidable this change, and whatever advantages may spring from it, it is already rapidly producing again a thoroughly corrupt House of Commons; a House, that is, in which votes are regularly bought by the Government, not with money, but with corrupt concessions to the demands of individuals or small groups of men who have no sort of title to determine the policy of the nation. There is no reason to doubt that this grave evil will go on increasing because it is by the same process that members of the House are themselves more and more getting to be elected. Each little group of electors with a separate interest of some kind demands a promise as the price of its votes, and refuses more and more to merge its own particular

fancies in the broad interest of the State. Doubtless good accompanies evil as certainly as evil accompanies good, and this disintegration of the electorate brings into prominence and fuller consideration all the varied wants and wishes of the people. But its effect upon the House of Commons as a legislative body is purely mischievous, and as the House of Commons degenerates the value of the House of Lords steadily increases. The importance of preserving its present method of choice increases at the same time, for this method makes it in fact the true representative of the upper classes without the special defects of elective representation. These defects show themselves glaringly in the Lower House, and it is the special business of the House of Peers not to reproduce them, but to be a remedy for them so far as this is possible. It is only possible in a limited degree. Neither the House of Peers nor any other power can prevent the nation from going wrong if there is not enough good sense in it to listen to reason when time is given for the purpose. The present danger is that the House of Lords may yield too often and too soon to decisions of the House of Commons with which it does not agree. It occupies a post of vast responsibility. Its powers are great and should be used without hesitation or fear. It is its duty to revise impartially every bill sent up to it; to reject nothing that is reasonable and just, but to assent to nothing that is unjust or unreasonable; and in the latter case, if the House of Commons persists in its own decision, to use its suspensory power at once and invariably, till it is satisfied that the majority of the nation understand the matter and have decided upon it. And to know this it is not always necessary to wait for a dissolution, nor does it always follow that a new election will give that knowledge. But public opinion expresses itself by various signs, and it is a statesman's business to interpret them.

PERLYCROSS.

BY R. D. BLACKMORE.

CHAPTER XXVII.

PANIC.

CHRISTMAS DAY fell on a Friday that year, and the funeral of that ancient woman took place on the previous afternoon. The curate had never read the burial-service before to so small an audience. For the weather was bitterly cold, and poor Mrs. Tremlett had out-lived all her friends, if she ever had any; no one expected a farthing from her, and no one cared to come and shudder at her grave. Of all her many descendants none, except the child Zip, was present; and she would have stood alone upon the frozen bank, unless Mrs. Muggridge had very kindly offered to come and hold the shivering and streaming little hand.

What was to be done with Zip? Nobody came forward. There were hundreds of kind people in the parish, and dozens to whom the poor wail would have been a scarcely perceptible burden. Yet nobody cared to have a Tremlett at his hearth, and everybody saw the duty marked out for his neighbour. "Then I will take her," said Mr. Penniloe with his true benevolence; "but the difficulty is where to place her. She cannot well be among my children yet, until I know more about her; and, although the old family is so reduced, the kitchen is scarcely the place for her." However, that question soon answered itself; and though little Zip was at first a sad puzzle (especially to the staid Muggridge), her grateful and loving nature soon began to win a warm hold and a tranquil home for her.

That winter, although it began rather early, was not of prolonged severity, for the frost broke up on

Christmas night, at least in the west of England, with a heavy fall of snow which turned to rain. But Christmas Day itself was very bright and pleasant, with bracing air, hard frozen snow, and firm sunshine throwing long shadows on it, and sparkling on the icicles from thatch and spout and window-frame. As the boys of the Sunday school filed out at the call of the bells in the tower chiming (after long silence while the arch was being cut), and as they formed into grand procession under the military eye of Jakes, joyfully they watched their cloudy breath ascending, or blew it in a column on some other fellow's cap. Visions were before them,—a pageantry of joy, a fortnight of holidays, a fortnight of sliding, snow-balling, bone-runners, Cooper Baker's double-hoops,—why not even skates? But alas, even now the wind was backing, as the four vanes with rare unanimity proclaimed; a white fog, that even a boy could stand out of, was stealing up the valley, while the violet tone of the too transparent sky, and the whiteness of the sun (which used to be a dummy fireball), and even the short sharp clack of the bells, were enough to tell any boy with weather eyes and ears that the nails on his heels would do no cobbler's click again till the holiday time was over.

But blessed are they who have no prophetic gift, be it of the weather or of things yet more unstable. All went to church in a happy frame of mind, and the parson in a like mood looked upon them. Every head was there that he had any right to count, covered or uncovered. Of the latter perhaps more than a Sunday would produce; of the former not so many, but to a Christian mind enough; for

how shall a great church-festival be kept without a cook? But the ladies who were there were in very choice attire, happy in having nothing but themselves to dress; all in good smiling condition, and reserving for home use their candid reviews of one another. There was the genial and lively Mrs. Farrant whose good word and good sayings everybody valued; close at her side was her daughter Minnie, provided by nature with seasonable gifts, lips more bright than the holly-berry, teeth more pearly than mistletoe, cheeks that proved the hardness of the rose in Devon, and eyes that anticipated Easter-tide with the soft glance of the forget-me-not. Then there was Mrs. John Horner, *interdum aspera cornu*, but *facnum habens* for the roast-beef time; and kind Mrs. Anning (quite quit of this tale, though the Perle runs through her orchard); and tall Mrs. Webber with two pretty girls, all purely distinct from the lawyer; and Mrs. James Hollyer and Mrs. John Hollyer, both great in hospitality; and others of equally worthy order, for whom the kind hearts of Bright and Cobden would have ached, had they not been blind seers.

To return to our own sheep, themselves astray, there was no denying Mrs. Gilham, looking still a Christian up a fathom of sea-green bonnet; and her daughter Rose, now so demure if ever she caught a wandering eye that it had to come again to beg pardon; and by her side a young man stood, with no eyes at all for the prettiest girl inside the sacred building!

But strange as it may seem, he had eyes enough and to spare for a young man opposite, whose face he perused with perpetual inquiry, which the other understood, but did not want to apprehend. For instance, "How is your very darling sister? Have you heard from her by the latest post? Did she say anything about me? When is she coming to Perlycross again? Do you think she is reading the same psalm that we are? Have

they got any Christmas parties on? I hope there is no mistletoe up that way, or at any rate no hateful fellow near her with it!" These and fifty other points of private worship, not to be discovered in the Book of Common Prayer even by the cleverest anagram of Ritualist, did Frank Gilham vainly strive to moot with Jemmy Fox across the aisle, instead of being absorbed and rapt in the joyful tidings of the day. Neither was Jemmy Fox a ha'porth more devout. With the innate selfishness of all young men, he had quite another dish of fish to fry for his own plate. As for Frank Gilham's, he would upset it joyfully, in spite of all sympathy or gratitude. And, if so low a metaphor can ever be forgiven, Jemmy's fish, though not in sight but in a brambly corner, was fairly hooked and might be felt; whereas Frank Gilham's, if she had ever seen his fly, had (so far as he could be sure) never even opened mouth to take it; but had sailed away upstream, leaving a long furrow, as if (like the celebrated trout in Crocker's Hole) she scorned any tackle a poor farmer could afford. Fox, on the other hand, had reasonable hopes that patience and discretion and the flowing stream of time would bring his lovely prize to bank at last. For the chief thing still against him was that black and wicked charge; and even now he looked at all the women in the church with very little interest in their features, but keen inquiry as to their expression. His eyes put the question to them, one after another, "My good madam, are you still afraid of me?" And sad to say, the answer from too many of them was, "Well, I had rather not shake hands with you till you have cleared your reputation." So certain is it that if once a woman has believed a thing, be it good or be it evil, nothing but the evidence of her own eyes will uproot that belief, and sometimes not even that.

Especially now with Lady Waldron, Fox felt certain that his case stood

thus; that in spite of all the arguments of Christie and of Iæz he was not yet acquitted, though less stubbornly condemned; and so long as that state of things lasted, he could not (with proper self-respect) press his suit upon the daughter. For it should be observed that he had no doubt yet of the genuine strength of her ladyship's suspicions. Mr. Penniloe had not thought it right or decent, placed as he was towards the family, to impart to young Jemmy Sir Harrison Gowler's hateful (because misogynic) conclusions.

That excellent preacher, and noble exemplar, the Reverend Philip Penniloe, gave out his text in a fine sonorous voice echoing through the great pillars of his heart, three words, as many as can ever rouse an echo, and all of them short,—“On earth, peace.”

He was gazing on his flock with large goodwill and that desire to see the best side of them which is creditable to both parties, for take them altogether they were a peaceful flock,—when a crack, as of thunder and lightning all in one, rang in every ear and made a stop in every heart. Before anybody could start up to ask about it, a cavernous rumble rolled into a quick rattle, and then deep silence followed. Nervous folk started up, slower persons stared about, even the coolest and most self-possessed doubted their arrangements for the Day of Judgment. The sunlight was shining through the windows of the south aisle, and none could put the blame on any storm outside. Then panic arose, as at a trumpet-call. People huddled anyhow to rush out of their pews, without even sense enough to turn the button-latch. Bald heads were plunging into long-ribboned bonnets, fathers forgot their children, young men their sweethearts, but mothers pushed their little ones before them. “Fly for dear life,” was the impulse of the men; “Save the life dearer than my own,” was that of the women. That is the moment to be sure what love is. “Sit

still, boys, or I'll skin you.”—Sergeant Jakes' voice was heard above the uproar; many believed that the roof was falling in; every kind of shriek and scream abounded.

“My friends,” said Mr. Penniloe in a loud clear voice, and lifting up his Bible calmly, “remember in Whose house and in Whose hands we are. It is but a fall of something in the chancel; it cannot hurt you. Perhaps some brave man will go behind the screen and just tell us what has happened. I would go myself if I could leave the pulpit.”

People were ashamed when they saw little Fay run from her seat to the newly-finished steps, and begin groping at the canvas while she smiled up at her father. In a moment three men drew her back and passed in. They were Jemmy Fox, Frank Gilham, and the gallant Jakes; and a cloud of dust floated out as they vanished. Courage returned, and the rush and crush were stayed, while Horner and Farrant, the two churchwardens, came with long strides to join the explorers.

Deep silence reigned when Doctor Fox returned, and at the request of Farmer John addressed the parson so that all could hear. “There is no danger, sir, of any further fall. There has been a sort of settlement of the south-east corner. The stone screen is cracked, and one end of it has dropped, and the small lancet window has tumbled in. All is now quite firm again. There is not the smallest cause for fear.”

“Thank God!” said Mr. Penniloe; “and thank you, my friends, for telling us. And now, so soon as order is quite restored, I shall beg to return to the discussion of my text, which with your permission I will read again.”

As soon as he had finished a very brief discourse, worthy of more attention than it could well secure, his flock hurried gladly away, with much praise of his courage and presence of mind, but no thought of the heavy loss and sad blow cast upon him. Fox

alone remained behind, to offer aid and sympathy when the parson laid his gown aside and came to learn the worst of it. They found that the south-east corner of the chancel-wall, with the external quoin and two buttresses, had parted from the rest and sunk bodily to the depth of a yard or more, bearing away a small southern window, a portion of the roof, and several panels of that equally beautiful and unlucky screen.

At a rough guess, at least another hundred pounds would be required to make good the damage. It was not only this, but the sense of mishaps so frequent and unaccountable (few of which have been even mentioned here) that now began to cast heavy weight and shadow upon the cheerful heart of Penniloe. For it seemed as if all things combined against him, both as regarded the work itself and the means by which alone it could be carried on. And this last disaster was the more depressing, because no cause whatever could be found for it. That wall had not been meddled with in any way externally, because it seemed quite substantial; and even inside there had been but little done to it, simply a shallow excavation made for the plinth, or footings, of the newly-erected screen.

"Never mind, sir," said Fox; "it can soon be put to rights; and your beautiful screen will look ever so much better without that lancet window, which has always appeared to me quite out of place."

"Perhaps," replied the parson, in a sad low voice, and with a shake of his head which meant, "All very fine; but how on earth am I to get the money?"

Even now the disaster was not complete. Subscriptions had grown slack, and some had even been withdrawn, on the niggardly plea that no church was worth preserving which could not protect even its own dead. And now the news of this occurrence made that matter worse again, for the blame of course fell upon Penniloe.

"What use to help a man who cannot help himself?" "A fellow shouldn't meddle with bricks and mortar, unless he was brought up to them." "I like him too well to give him another penny. If I did he'd pull the tower down upon his own head." Thus and thus spoke they who should have flown to the rescue; some even friendly enough to deal the coward's blow at the unfortunate. Moreover that very night the frost broke up with a fall of ten inches of watery snow, on the wet back of which came more than half an inch of rain, the total fall being two inches and three quarters. The ground was too hard to suck any of it in; water by the acre lay on streaky fields of ground-ice; every gateway poured its runnel, and every flinty lane its torrent. The Perle became a roaring flood, half a mile wide in the marshes; and the Suscot brook dashed away the old mill-wheel, and whirled some of it down as far as Joe Crang's anvil, fulfilling thereby an old prophecy. Nobody could get, without swimming horse or self, from Perlycombe to Perlycross, or from Perlycross to Perilton; and old mother Pods was drowned in her own cottage. The view of the valley, from either Beacon Hill or Hagdon, was really grand for any one tall enough to wade so far up the weltering ways. Old Channing vowed that he had never seen such a flood, and feared that the big bridge would be washed away; but now was seen the value of the many wide arches which had puzzled Christie Fox in the distance. Alas for the Hopper, that he was so far away at this noble time for a cross-country run; but he told Pike afterwards, and Mrs. Muggridge too, that he had a good time of it even in the Mendips.

In this state of things, the condition of the chancel, with the shattered roof yawning to the reek of the snow-slides and a southern gale hurling floods in at the wall-gaps, may better be imagined than described, as a swimming rat perhaps reported to his sodden

family. And people had a fine view of it at the Sunday service, for the canvas curtain had failed to resist the swag and the bellying of the blast, and had fallen in a squashy pile, forming a rough breakwater for the mortary lake behind it.

There was nothing to be done for the present except to provide against further mischief. The masons from Exeter had left work, by reason of the frost, some time ago; but under the directions of Mr. Richard Horner the quoin was shored up, and the roof and window made waterproof with tarpaulins. So it must remain till Easter now, when the time of year, and possibly a better tide of money, might enable beaten Christians to put shoulder to the hod again. Meanwhile was there any chance of finding any right for the wrong, which put every man who looked forward to his grave out of all conceit with Perlycross?

"Vaither, do 'e care to plaze your luvving darter, as 'e used to doo? Or be 'e channged, and not the zame to her?"

"The vurry za-am, the vurry za-am," Mr. Penniloe answered, with his eyes glad to rest on her, yet compelled by his conscience to correct her vowel sounds. It had long been understood between them that Fay might forsake upon occasion what we now call "higher culture" and try her lissome tongue at the soft Ionic sounds, which those who know nothing of the West call *Doric*.

"Then, vaither," cried the child, rising to the situation, "whatt vordo 'e putt both han's avore the eyes of 'e? The Lard in heaven can zee 'e, arl the zaam." The little girl was kneeling with both elbows on a chair, and her chin set up steadfastly between her dimpled hands, while her clear eyes, gleaming with the tears she was repressing, dwelt upon her father's downcast face.

"My darling, my own darling, you are the image of your mother," Mr. Penniloe exclaimed, as he rose and

caught her up. "What is the mammon of this world to heaven's angels?" After that his proper course would have been to smoke a pipe, if that form of thank-offering had been duly recommended by the rising school of churchmen. His omission however was soon repaired; for, before he could even relapse towards "the blues," the voice of a genuine smoker was heard, and the step of a man of substance, the time being now the afternoon of Monday.

"Halloa, Penniloe!" this gentleman exclaimed. "How are you this frightful weather? Very glad to see you. Made a virtue of necessity; can't have the hounds out, and so look up my flock. Never saw the waters out so much in all my life. Nancy had to swim at Susscot ford. Thought we should have been washed down, but Crang threw us a rope; says nobody could cross yesterday. Nancy must have a hot mash, please Mrs. Muggridge; I'll come and see to it, if you'll have the water hot. Harry's looking after her till I come back; like to see a boy that takes kindly to a horse. What a job I had to get your back-gate open! Never use your stable-yard, it seems. Beats me how any man can live without a horse! Well, my dear fellow, I hope the world only deals with you according to your merits. Bless my heart, why, that can never be Fay! What a little beauty! Got a kiss to spare, my dear? Don't be afraid of me; children always love me; got one little girl just your height; won't I make her jealous when I get home! Got something in my vady that will make your pretty eyes flash. Come, come, Penniloe, this won't do! You don't look at all the thing; want a thirty mile ride and a drop of brown mahogany—put a little colour into your learned face. Just you should have a look at my son Jack; mean him for this little puss, if ever he grows good enough; not a bad fellow though. And how's your little Mike? Why, there he is, peeping round the corner! I'll have it out

with him when I've had some dinner. Done yours, I dare say? Anything will do for me; a rasher of bacon and a couple of poached eggs is a dinner for a lord, I say. You don't eat enough, that's quite certain. Saw an awful thing in the papers last week. Parsons are going to introduce fasting! Protestant parsons, mind you! Can't believe it. Shall have to join the Church of Rome if they do. All jolly fellows there—never saw a lean one. I suppose I am about the last man you expected to turn up. Glad to see you though, upon my soul! You don't like that expression,—ha, how well I know your face!—strictly clerical I call it though, or at any rate professional. But bless my heart alive (if you like that better) what has all our parish been about? Why a dead man belongs to the parson, not the doctor. The doctors have done for him, and they ought to have done with him. But we parsons never back one another up. Not enough colour in the cloth, I always say; getting too much of black and all black."

The Rev. John Chevithorne, rector of the parish, was doing his best at the present moment to relieve "the cloth" of that imputation. For his coat was dark green, and his waistcoat of red shawl-stuff, and his breeches of buff corduroy, while his boots (heavy jack-boots coming half-way up the thigh) might have been of any colour under the sun without the sun knowing what the colour was, so spattered and plastered and clobbered with mud were they. And throughout all his talk he renewed the hand-shakes, in true pump-handle fashion, at short intervals, for he was strongly attached to his curate. They had been at the same college and on the same staircase, and although of different standing and very different characters, had taken to one another with a liking which had increased as years went on. Mr. Penniloe had an Englishman's love of field-sports; and though he had repressed it from devotion to his

calling, he was too good a Christian to condemn those who did otherwise.

"Chevithorne, I have wanted you most sadly," he said, as soon as his guest was reclad from his vady, and had done ample justice to rashers and eggs. "I am really ashamed of it, but fear greatly that I shall have to be down upon you again. Children, you may go and get a good run before dark. Things have been going on,—in fact the Lord has not seemed to prosper this work at all."

"If you are going to pour forth a cloud of sorrows you won't mind my blowing one of comfort." The rector was a pleasant man to look at, and a pleasant one to deal with if he liked his customer; but a much sharper man of the world than his curate, prompt, resolute, and penetrating, short in his manner, and when at all excited apt to indulge himself in the language of the laity. "Well," he said, after listening to the whole church history, "I am not a rich man, as you know, my friend. People suppose that a man with three livings must be rolling in money, and all that; they never think twice of the outgoings. And Jack goes to Oxford in January; that means something, as you and I know well; though he has promised me not to hunt there, and he is a boy who never goes back from his word. But chance of course is my special business. Will you let me off for fifty, at any rate for the present? And don't worry yourself about the debt; we'll make it all right among us. Our hunt will come down with another fifty, if I put it before them to the proper tune, when they come back to work after this infernal muck. Only you mustn't look like this. The world gets worse and worse every day, and can't spare the best man it contains. You should have seen the rick of hay I bought last week, just because I didn't push my knuckles into it. Thought I could trust my brother Tom's churchwarden. And Tom laughs at me, which digs it in too hard. Had a rise out of him last

summer though, and know how to do him again for Easter-offerings. Tom is too sharp for a man who has got no family; won't come down with two-pence for Jack's time at Oxford. And he has got all the Chevithorne estates, you know; nothing but the copyhold came to me. Always the way of the acres, with a man who could put a child to stand on every one of them. However, you never hear me complain. But surely you ought to get more out of those Waldrons. An offering to the Lord in *memoriam*, a proper view of chastisement; have you tried to work it up?"

"I have not been able to take that view of it," Mr. Penniloe answered, smiling for a moment, though doubtful of the right to do so. "How can I ask them for another farthing after what has happened? And leaving that aside, I am now in a position in which it would be unbecoming. You may have heard that I am trustee for a part of the Waldron estates, to secure a certain sum for the daughter, Nicie."

"Then that puts it out of the question," said the rector. "I know what those trust-plagues are; I call them a tax upon good repute; 'The friendly balm that breaks the head;' I never understood that passage, till in a fool's moment I accepted a trusteeship. However, go on with that Waldron affair. They are beginning to chaff me about it shamefully, now that their anger and fright are gone by. Poor as I am, I would give a hundred pounds for the sake of the parish to have it all cleared up. But the longer it goes on the darker it gets. You used to be famous for concise abstracts. Do you remember our Thucydides? Wasn't it old Short that used to put a year of the war on an oyster-shell, and you beat him by putting it on a thumbnail? Give us in ten lines all the theories of the great Perlycrucian mystery. Ready in a moment; I'll jot them down. What's the Greek for Perlycross? Puzzle even you, I think, that would.

Number them, one, two, and so on. There must be a dozen by this time."

Mr. Penniloe felt some annoyance at this too jocular view of the subject; but he bore in mind that his rector was not so sadly bound up with it as his own life was. So he set down, as offering the shortest form, the names of those who had been charged with the crime, either by the public voice or by private whisper. (1.) Fox. (2.) Gronow. (3.) Gowler. (4.) Some other medical man of those parts,—conjecture founded very often upon the last half-year's account. (5.) Lady Waldron herself. (6.) Some relative of hers, with or without her knowledge. "Now, I think that exhausts them," the curate continued; "and I will discuss them in that order. No. 1 is the general opinion still. I mean that of the great majority outside the parish, and throughout the county. None who knew Jemmy could conceive it, and those who know nothing of him will dismiss it, I suppose, when they hear of his long attachment to Miss Waldron. Nos. 2, 3, and 4, may also be dismissed, being founded in each case on personal dislikes, without a *scintilla* of evidence to back it. As regards probability, no. 4 would take the lead for Gronow and Gowler are out of the question. The former has given up practice, and hates it except for the benefit of his friends; and as for Gowler, he could have no earthly motive. He understood the case as well as if he had seen it, and his whole time is occupied with his vast London practice. But no. 4 also is reduced to the very verge of impossibility. There is no one at Exeter who would dream of such things: no country practitioner would dare it, even if the spirit of research could move him; and as for Bath and Bristol, I have received a letter from Gowler disposing of all possibility there."

"Who suggested no. 5? That seems a strange idea. What on earth should Lady Waldron do it for?"

"Gowler suggested it. I tell you in the strictest confidence, Chevithorne; of course you will feel that; I have told no one else, and I should not have told you, except that I want your advice about it. You have travelled in Spain; you know much of Spanish people. I reject the theory altogether; though Gowler is most positive, and laughs at my objections. You remember him, of course?"

"I should think so," said the rector; "a wonderfully clever fellow, but never much liked. Nobody could ever get on with him, but you; and two more totally different men—however, an opinion of his is worth something. What motive could he discover for it?"

"Religious feelings. Narrow if you like (for we are as Catholic as they are) but very strong, as one could well conceive, if only they suited the character. The idea would be that the wife, unable to set aside the husband's wishes openly or unwilling to incur the odium of it, was secretly resolved upon his burial elsewhere and with the rites which she considered needful."

"It is a most probable explanation. I wonder that it never occurred to you. Gowler has hit the mark. What a clever fellow! And see how it exculpates the parish! I shall go back with a great weight off my mind. Upon my soul, Penniloe, I am astonished that you had to go to London to find out this *a, b, c*. If I had been over here a little more often I should have hit upon it long ago."

"Chevithorne, I think that very likely," the curate replied, with the mildness of those who let others be rushed off their legs by themselves. "The theory is plausible; it accounts for everything, fits in with the very last discoveries, proves this parish, and even the English nation, guiltless. Nevertheless, it is utterly wrong, according at least to my view of human nature."

"Your view of human nature was

always too benevolent. That was why everybody liked you so. But, my dear fellow, you have lived long enough now to know that it only does for Christmas Day sermons."

"I have not lived long enough, and hope to do so never," Mr. Penniloe answered very quietly, but with a manner, which the other understood, of the larger sight looking over hat-crowns. "Will you tell me, Chevithorne, upon what points you rely? And then I will tell you what I think of them."

"Why, if it comes to argument, what chance have I against you? You can put things, and I can't. But I can sell a horse, and you can buy it—fine self-sacrifice on your side. I go strictly upon common sense. I have heard a lot of that Lady Waldron; I have had some experience of Spanish ladies; good and bad, no doubt, just as English ladies are. It is perfectly obvious to my mind that Lady Waldron has done all this."

"To my mind," replied Mr. Penniloe, looking stedfastly at the rector, "it is equally obvious that she has not."

"Upon what do you go?" asked the rector rather warmly, for he prided himself on his knowledge of mankind, though admitting very handsomely his ignorance of books.

"I go upon my faith in womankind." The curate spoke softly, as if such a thing were new, and truly it was not at all in fashion then. "This woman loved her husband; her grief was deep and genuine; his wishes were sacred to her. She is quite incapable of double-dealing; and indeed I would say, that if ever there was a straightforward, simple-hearted woman——"

"If ever, if ever," replied Mr. Chevithorne, with a fine indulgent smile. "But upon the whole, I think well of them. Let us have a game of draughts, my dear fellow, where the queens jump over all the poor men."

"Kings, we call them here," answered Mr. Penniloe.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

VAGABONDS.

ALTHOUGH Mr. Penniloe's anxiety about the growth of the church-debt was thus relieved a little, another of his troubles was by no means lightened through the visit of the rector. That nasty suspicion, suggested by Gowler and heartily confirmed by Chevithorne, was a very great discomfort, and even a torment, inasmuch as he had no one to argue it with. He reasoned with himself that, even if the lady were a schemer so heartless as to ruin a young man (who had done her no harm) that she might screen herself, as well as an actress so heaven-gifted as to impose on every one (both of which qualifications he warmly denied) yet there was no motive, so far as he could see, strong enough to lead her into such a crooked course. To the best of his belief she was far too indifferent upon religious questions: he had never seen, or heard, of a priest at Walderscourt; and although she never came to church with the others of the family, she had allowed her only daughter to be brought up as a Protestant. She certainly did not value our great nation quite so much as it values itself, and in fact was rather an ardent Spaniard, though herself of mixed race. But it seemed most unlikely that either religion or patriotism, or both combined, were strong enough to drive her into action contrary to her dead husband's wishes and to her own character, so far as an unprejudiced man could judge it.

There remained the last theory, no. 6, as aforesaid. To the curate it seemed the more probable one, although surrounded with difficulties. There might be some Spanish relative, or even one of another country, resolute to save the soul of Sir Thomas Waldron without equal respect for his body; and in that case it was just possible

that the whole thing might have been arranged, and done, without Lady Waldron's knowledge. But if that were so, what meant the visit of the foreigner, who had tried to escape his notice when he left the coach?

Before Mr. Penniloe could think it out, Jemmy Fox (who might have helped him, by way of Nicie, upon that last point) was called away suddenly from Perlycross. His mother was obliged, in the course of nature, to look upon him now as everybody's prop and comfort, because her husband could not be regarded in that light any longer. And two or three things were coming to pass, of family import and issue, which could not go aright except through Jemmy's fingers. And of these things the most important was concerning his sister Christina.

"I assure you, Jemmy, that her state of mind is most unsatisfactory," the lady said to her son upon their very first consultation. "She does not care for any of her usual occupations. She takes no interest in parish matters. She let that wicked old Margery Daw get no less than three pairs of blankets, and Polly Church go without any at all,—at least she might, so far as Christie cared. Then you know that admirable Huggins' Charity, a loaf and three-halfpence for every cottage containing more than nine little ones; well, she let them pass the children from one house to another, and neither loaves nor halfpence held out at all! 'I'll make it good,' she said; 'what's the odds?' or something almost as vulgar. How thankful I was that Sir Henry did not hear her! 'Oh I wish he had, rayther,' she exclaimed with a toss of her head. You know that extremely low slangish way of saying *rayther* to everything. It does irritate me so, and she knows it. One would think that instead of desiring to please as excellent a man as ever lived, her one object was to annoy and disgust him. And she does not even confine herself to—to the language of good society. She

has come back from Perlycross with a sad quantity of Devonshirisms; and she always brings them out before Sir Henry, who is, as you know, a fastidious man without any love of jocularly. And it is such a very desirable thing; I did hope it would have been all settled before your dear father's birthday."

"Well, mother, and so it may easily be. The only point is this,—after all her bad behaviour, will Sir Henry come to the scratch?"

"My dear son! My dear Jemmy, what an expression! And with reference to wedded life! But if I understand your meaning, he is only waiting my permission to propose; and I am only waiting for a favourable time. The sweetest-tempered girl I ever saw; better even than yours, Jemmy, and yours has always been very fine. But now—and she has found out, or made up, some wretched low song, and she sings it down the stairs, or even comes singing it into the room, pretending that she does not see me;—all about the miseries of stepmothers. Oh, she is most worrying and aggravating; and to me, who have laboured so hard for her good! Sometimes I fancy that she must have seen somebody;—surely, it never could have been at Perlycross?"

"I'll put a stop to all that pretty smartly," the doctor exclaimed, with fine confidence. "But,—but perhaps it would be better, mother, for me not to seem to take Sir Henry's part too strongly; at any rate until things come to a climax. He is coming this afternoon, you said; let him pop the question at once, and if she dares to refuse him, then let me have a turn at at her. She has got a rare tongue; but I think I know something,—at any rate, you know that I don't stand much nonsense."

They had scarcely settled their arrangements for her, when down the stairs came Christie looking wonderfully pretty; but her song was not of equal beauty.

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There was an old dog, and his name was "Shep;" Says he to his daughter, don't you ever be a Step.

She nodded to her mother very dutifully, and to her brother with a smile that made him laugh; and then she went out of the front door almost as if she felt contempt for it.

"Won't do, won't do at all," said Jemmy. "She'll say 'no,' this afternoon. Girls never know what they are about. But better let him bring it to the point; and then leave it to me, mother. I understand her; and she knows I am not to be trifled with."

Sir Henry Haggerstone came in time for luncheon, showed no signs of nervousness, and got on very well with everybody. He knew something of everything that is likely to be talked of anywhere; and yet he had the knack of letting down his knowledge as a carpet for his friends to walk upon. Everybody thought: "Well, I have taught him something. He could not be expected to understand that subject; but now, from his own words, I feel that he will. What a fool Smith is, to be bothering a man like Sir Henry with the stuff that is *a, b, c* to him! I wonder that he could put up with it."

But however great Sir Henry was in powers of conversation, or even of auscultation, his eloquence, if there was any, fell flat, and his audience was brief, and the answer unmistakable. "It can't be, it mustn't be, it shan't be, at any price!" That last expression was a bit of slang, but it happened to fit the circumstances.

"But why can it not be? Surely, Miss Fox, I may ask you to give me some reason for that." The gentleman thought, "What a strange girl you are!" While the lady was thinking, "What a difference there is between an artificial man and a natural one!"

"What o'clock is it by that time-piece, if you please, Sir Henry Haggerstone?"

"Half-past two, within about two minutes."

"Thank you; can you tell me why it isn't half-past ten? Just because it isn't. And so now you understand."

"I am sorry to say that I do not very clearly. Probably it is very stupid of me. But can you not give me a little hope, Miss Fox?"

"Yes, a great deal and with my best wishes. There are thousands of nice girls, a thousand times nicer than I ever was, who would say 'yes,' in a minute."

"But the only one, whose 'yes' I want says 'no,' in less than half a minute!"

"To be sure she does, and means it all over; but begs to offer no end of thanks."

"Perhaps it is all for the best," he thought as he rode homeward slowly. "She is a very sweet girl; but of late she seems to have grown so fond of slang expressions—all very well for a man, but not at all what I like in a woman. I should have been compelled to break her of that trick; and even the sweetest-tempered woman hates to be corrected." This gentleman would have been surprised to hear that the phrases he disliked were used because he so thoroughly disliked them; which, to say the least, was unamiable.

"All settled? Hurrah! My dear Chris, let me congratulate you," cried Jemmy rushing in with a jaunty air, though he well knew what the truth was.

"Amen! It is a happy thing. That golden parallelogram, all tapered and well-rounded, will come to harass me no more."

"What a mixture of quotations! A girl alone could achieve it. A tapered parallelogram! But you have never been fool enough to refuse him?"

"I have been wise enough to do so."

"And soon you will be wise enough to think better of it. I shall take

good care to let him know that no notice is to be taken of your pretty little vagaries."

"Don't lose your temper, my dear Jemmy. As for taking notice of it, Sir Henry may be nothing very wonderful, but at any rate he is a gentleman."

"I am heartily glad that you have found that out. I thought nobody could be a gentleman unless he lived in a farm-house, and could do a day's ploughing, and shear his own sheep."

"Yes, oh yes! If he can roll his own pills, and mix his own black draughts, and stick a knife into any one."

"Now, it is no use trying to insult me, my dear girl. My profession is above all that."

"What, above its own business? Oh Jemmy, Jemmy! And yet, you know, you were afraid sometimes of leaving it all to that little boy George. However, George did the best part of it."

"Christie, I shall be off, because you don't know what you are talking of. I am sorry for any man who gets you."

"Ha! That depends upon whether I like him. If I do, wouldn't I polish his boots? If I don't, wouldn't I have the hair off his head?"

"Good-bye, my dear child, you will be better by and by."

"Stop," exclaimed Christie, who perceived that dear Jemmy preferred to have it out with her when she might be less ready; "don't be in such a hurry; there is no child with the measles, which is about the worst human complaint that you can cure. Just answer me one question. Have I ever interfered between you and Nicie Waldron?"

"The Lord look down upon me! What an idea! As if you could ever be so absurd!"

"The Lord looks down upon me also, Jemmy," said Christie, passing into a different mood. "And He gives me the right to see to my own

happiness without consulting you, any more than you do me."

The doctor made off without another word; for he was not a quarrelsome fellow, especially when he felt that he would get the worst of it. "Let her alone a bit," he told his mother. "She has been so much used to have her own way, that she expects to have it always. It will require a little judgment, and careful handling, to bring her out of her absurdities. You must not expect her to have the sense a man has; and she has got an idea that she is so clever, which makes her confoundedly obstinate. If you had heard how insolent she was to me, you would have been angry with her; but she cannot vex me with her childish little talk. I shall go for a thirty mile ride, dear mother, to get a little fresh air after all that. Don't expect me back to dinner. Be distant with her, and let her see that you are grieved; but give her no chance of arguing—if indeed she calls such stuff argument."

In a few minutes he was on the back of Perle (as he called the kindly and free-going little mare, who had brought him again from *Perlycross*) and trotting briskly towards the long curve of highlands which form the western bulwark of the Mendip Hills. The weather had been very mild and rather stormy ever since the Christmas frost broke up, and now in the first week of the year the air was quite gentle and pleasant. But the roads were heavy and very soft, as they always are in a thaw; and a great deal of water was out in the meadows, and even in the ditches alongside of the lanes. In a puzzle of country roads and commons, further from home than his usual track and very poorly furnished with guide-posts, Fox rode on without asking whither, caring only for the exercise and air, and absorbed in thought about the present state of things both at *Perlycross* and Foxden. To his quick perception and medical knowledge it was clear that his father's strength was

failing, gradually but without recall; and one of the very few things that can be done by medical knowledge is that it can tell us (when it likes) that it is helpless.

Now Jemmy was fond of his father, although there had been many breezes between them; and as nature will have it, he loved him a hundredfold now that he was sure to lose him. Moreover the change in his own position, which must ensue upon his father's death, was entirely against his liking. What he liked was simplicity, plain living, and plain speaking, with enough of this world's goods to help a friend in trouble, or a poor man in distress, but not enough to put one in a fright about the responsibility that turns the gold to lead. But now, if he should be compelled to take his father's place at Foxden as a landowner and a wealthy man, he must give up the practice of his beloved art, he must give up the active and changeful life, the free and easy manners, and the game with Bill and Dick, and assume the slow dignity and stiff importance, the consciousness of being an example and a law, and all the other briars and blackthorns in the paradise of wealth and station. Yet even while he sighed at the coming transformation, it never occurred to him that his sister was endowed with tastes no less simple than his own, and was not compelled by duty to forego them.

Occupied thus, and riding loose-reined without knowing or caring whither, he turned the corner of a high-banked lane and came upon a sight which astonished him. The deep lane ended with a hunting-gate leading to an open track across a level pasture, upon which the low sun cast long shadows of the rider's hat and shoulders and elbow lifted to unhasp the gate. Turning in the saddle he beheld a grand and fiery sunset, such as in mild weather often closes a winter but not wintry day.

A long cloud-bank, straight and

level at the base but arched and pulpy in its upper part, embosomed and turned into a deep red glow the yellow flush of the departing sun. Below this great volume of vapoury fire were long thin streaks of carmine, pencilled very delicately on a background of limpid hyaline. It was not the beauty of the sky however, nor the splendour, nor the subtlety, that made the young man stop and gaze. Fine sunsets he had seen by the hundred, and looked at them if there was time to spare; but what he had never seen before was the grandeur of the earth's reply. On the opposite side of the level land, a furlong or so in front of him, arose the great breastwork to leagues of plain: first a steep pitch of shale and shingle, channelled with storm-lines and studded with gorse; and then, from its crest, a tall crag towering, straight and smooth as a castle-wall. The rugged pediment was dark and dim and streaked with sombre shadows; but the bastion cliff above it mantled with a deep red glow, as if colour had its echo, in answer to the rich suffusion of that sunset cloud. Even the ivy and other creepers on its kindled face shone forth, like chaplets thrown upon a shield of ruddy gold; and all the environed air was thrilling with the pulses of red light.

Fox was smitten with rare delight, for he was an observant fellow, and even Perle's bright eyes expanded as if they had never seen such a noble vision. "I'll be up there before it is gone," cried Jemmy, like a boy in full chase of a rainbow; "the view from that crag must be glorious."

At the foot of the hill stood a queer little hostel, called *The Smoking Lime-kiln*; and there he led his mare into the stable, ordered some bread and cheese for half an hour later, and made off at speed for the steep ascent. Active as he was and sound of foot, he found it a slippery and awkward climb, on account of the sliding shingle; but after a sharp bout of leaping and

scrambling he stood at the base of the vertical rock, and looked back over the lowlands. The beauty of colour was vanishing now, and the glory of the clouds grown sombre, for the sun had sunk into a pale gray bed; but the view was vast and striking. The fairest and richest of English land, the broad expanse of the western plains for leagues and leagues rolled before him, deepening beneath the approach of night, and shining with veins of silver where three flooded rivers wound their way. Afar towards the north, a faint gleam showed the hovering of light above the Severn sea; whence slender clues of fog began to steal, like snakes, up the watercourses and the marshy inlets. Before there was time to watch them far, the veil of dusk fell over them, and things unwatched stood forth and took a prominence unaccountable, according to the laws of twilight arbitrary and mysterious.

Fox felt that the view had repaid his toil, and set his face to go down again, with a tendency towards bread and cheese; but his very first step caused such a slide of shingle and loose ballast, that he would have been lucky to escape with a broken bone had he followed it. Thereupon instead of descending there, he thought it wiser to keep along the ledge at the foot of the precipice, and search for a safer track down the hill. None however presented itself, until he had turned the corner of the limestone crag and reached its southern side, where the descent became less abrupt and stony. Here he was stepping sideways down, for the pitch was still sharp and dangerous, and the daylight failing in the blinks of hill, when he heard a loud shout—"Jemmy! Jemmy!"—which seemed to spring out of the earth at his feet. In the start of surprise he had shaped his lips for the answering halloo, when good luck more than discretion saved him; for both his feet slipped, and his breath was caught. By a quick turn he recovered balance; but the check had given him time to think, and spying a

stubby cornel-bush, he came to a halt behind it and looked through the branches cautiously.

Some twenty yards further down the hill he saw a big man come striding forth from the bowels of the earth, as it seemed at first, and then standing with his back turned and the haze beyond enlarging him. And then again that mighty shout rang up the steep and down the valley—"Jemmy, Jemmy, come back, I tell thee; or I'll let thee know what's what!"

Fox kept close and crouched in his bush, for he never had seen such a man till now, unless it were in a caravan; and a shudder ran through him, as it came home that his friend down there could with one hand rob, throttle, and throw him down a mining-shaft. This made him keep a very sharp look-out, and have one foot ready for the lightest of leg-bail.

Presently a man of moderate stature, who could have walked under the other's arm, came panting and grumbling back again from a bushy track leading downwards. He flung something on the ground and asked: "What be up now, to vetch me back up-hill for? Harvey, there bain't no sense in 'e. Maight every bit as well a' had it out over a half pint of beer."

"Sit you there, Jem," replied the other, pressing him down on a ledge of stone with the weight of one thumb on his shoulder. Then he sat himself down on a higher ridge, and pulled out a pipe, with a sigh as loud as the bellows of a forge could compass; and then slowly spread upon the dome of his knee a patch of German punk, and struck sparks into it.

There was just light enough for Fox to see that the place where they sat was the mouth of a mining shaft, or sloping adit, over the rough stone crown of which, standing as he did upon a higher level, he could descry their heads and shoulders, and the big man's fingers as he moved them round his pipe. Presently a whiff of coarse

brown smoke came floating uphill to the doctor's nostrils; and his blood ran cold, as he began to fear that this great Harvey must be the Harvey Tremlett of whom he had heard from Mr. Penniloe.

"Made up my maind I have. Can't stand this no longer," said the big man, with the heavy drawl which nature has inflicted upon very heavy men. "Can't get no more for a long day's work than a hop o' my thumb like you does."

"And good raison why, mate. Do e' ever do a hard day's work?" Fox could have sworn that the smaller throat gave utterance to the larger share of truth. "What be the vally of big arms and legs when a chap dothn't care to make use of 'un?"

But the big man was not controversial. Giants are generally above that weakness. He gave a long puff, and confined himself to facts. "Got my money, and d—d little it is. And now I means to hook it. You can hang on, if you be vule enough."

"What an old Turk it is!" Jem replied reproachfully. "Did ever you know me throw you over, Harvey? Who is it brings you all the luck? Tell 'e what,—let's go back to Clampits. What a bit o' luck that loud-erin' wor!"

"Hor, hor, hor!" the big man roared. "A purty lot they be to Perlycrass! To take Jemmy Kettel for a gentleman! And a doctor, too! Oh Lord! Oh Lord! Doctor Jemmy Vox Kettel! Licensed to deal in salts and zenna, powders, pills, and boluses! Oh Jemmy, Jemmy, my eye, my eye!"

"Could do it, I'll be bound, as well as he doth. A vaine doctor, to dig up the squire of the parish, and do it wrong way too, they zay of 'un! Vaine doctor, wasn't 'un? Oh Lord! Oh Lord!"

As these two rovers combined in a hearty roar of mirth at his expense, Dr. Jemmy Fox, instead of being grateful for a purely impartial opinion, gave way to ill feeling, and stamped

one foot in passionate remonstrance. Too late he perceived that this movement of his had started a pebble below the cornel-bush and sent it rolling down the steep. Away went the pebble with increasing skips, and striking the crown of the pit-mouth flew just over the heads of the uncouth jokers.

"Halloa, Jemmy, anybody up there? Just you goo and look, my boy."

Fox shrunk into himself, as he heard those words in a quicker roar coming up to him. If they should discover him, his only chance would be to bound down the hill, reckless of neck and desperate of accident. But the light of the sky at the top of the hill was blocked by the rampart of rock, and so there was nothing for him to be marked upon.

"Nort but a badger, or a coney there, I reckon," Jem Kettel said, after peering up the steep; and just then a rabbit of fast style of life whisked by. "Goo on, Harvey. You han't offered me no 'bacco!"

"You tak' and vinish 'un," said the lofty-minded giant, poking his pipe between the other fellow's teeth. "And now you give opinion, if the Lord hath gived thee any."

"Well, I be up for bunkum, every bit so much as you be. But where shall us be off to? That's the p'int of zettlement. Clampits, I say; roaring fun there, and the gim'-keepers aveared of 'e."

"Darsn't goo there yet, I tell 'e. Last thing old moother did was to send me word, passon to Perlycrass had got the tip on me. Don't want no bother with them blessed beaks again."

"Wonder you didn't goo and twist the passon's neck." The faithful mate looked up at him, as if the captain had failed of his duty unaccountably.

"Wouldn't touch a hair of that man's head, if it wor here atwixt my two knees." Harvey Tremlett brought his fist down on his thigh with a

smack that made the stones ring round him. "Tell 'e why, Jem Kettel. He have took my little Zip along of his own chiller, and a' maneth to make a lady on her. And a lady the little wench hath a right to be,—just you say the contrary—if hannient vam'ley, and all that, have right to count. Us Tremletts was here long afore they Waldrons."

The smaller man appeared afraid to speak. He knew the weak point of the big man perhaps, and that silence oils all such bearings.

"Tull 'e what, Jemmy," said the other coming round, after stripping his friend's mouth of his proper pipe; "us 'll go up country,—shoulder packs and be off, soon as ever the moon be up. Like to see any man stop me, I would"

He stood up with the power of his mighty size upon him; a man who seemed fit to stop an avalanche, and able to give as much trouble about stopping him.

"All right; I be your man," replied the other, speaking as if he were quite as big, and upon the whole more important. "Bristol fust, and then Lunnon, if so please 'e; always a bit of louderin' there. But that remindeth me of Perlycrass. Us be bound to be back by fair-time, you know; can't afford to miss old Timberlegs."

"Time enow for that," Harvey Tremlett answered. "Zix or seven weeks yet to Perlycrass fair. What time wor it as old Timberlegs ap'rinted?"

"Ten o'clock at naight, by church-yard wall. Reckon the old man hath another job of louderin' handy. What a spree that wor, and none a rap the wiser! Come along, Harvey, let's have a pint at the *Kiln*, to drink good luck to this here new start."

The big man took his hat off, while the other jumped nimbly on a stump and flung over his head the straps of both their bundles; and then with a few more leisurely and peaceful oaths they quitted their stony platform, and began to descend the winding paths.

from which Jem Kettel had been recalled.

Fox was content for a minute or two with peeping warily after them, while his whole frame tingled with excitement, wrath, and horror, succeeded by a burning joy at the knowledge thus vouchsafed to him by a higher power than fortune. As soon as he felt certain that they could not see him, even if they looked back again, he slipped from his lurking-place, and at some risk of limb set off in a straighter course than theirs for the public-house in the valley where a feeble light was twinkling. From time to time he could hear the two rovers laughing at their leisure, probably with fine enjoyment of very bad jokes at his expense. But he set his teeth, and made more speed, and keeping his distance from them easily arrived first at the inn, where he found his bread and cheese set forth in a little private parlour having fair view of the bar.

This suited him well, for his object was to obtain so clear a sight of them that no change of dress or disguise should cast any doubt upon their identity; and he felt sure that they were wending hither to drink good speed to their enterprise. There was not much fear of their recognizing him even if his face were known to them, which he did not think at all likely. But he provided against any such mishap by paying his bill beforehand, and placing his candle so that his face was in the dark. Then he fell to and enjoyed his bread and cheese, for the ride and the peril had produced fine relish, and a genuine Cheddar (now sighed for so vainly) did justice to his nativity. He also enjoyed, being now in safety, the sweet sense of turning the tables upon his wanton and hateful deriders. For sure enough, while his mouth was full and the froth on his ale was winking at him, in came those two scoffing fellows followed by a dozen other miners. It appeared to be pay-night, and generous men were shedding sixpences on

one another; but Fox saw enough to convince him that the rest fought shy of his two acquaintances. When he saw this, a wild idea occurred to him for a moment; was it not possible to arrest that pair, with the aid of their brother miners? But a little consideration showed the folly of such a project. He had now warrant, no witness, no ally, and he was wholly unknown in that neighbourhood. And even if the miners should believe his tale would they combine to lay hands on brother workmen, and deliver them over to the mercies of the law? Even if they would, it was doubtful that they could, sturdy fellows though they were.

But the young man was so loth to let these two vagabonds get away, that his next idea was to bribe somebody to follow them, and keep them in view until he should come in chase, armed with the needful warrant and supported by stout *posse comitatus*. He studied the faces of his friends at the bar, to judge whether any were fitted for the job. Alas, among all those rough and honest features there was not a spark of craft, nor a flash of swift intelligence. If one of them were put to watch another, the first thing he would do would be to go and tell him of it. And what Justice of the Peace would issue warrant upon a stranger's deposition of hearsays? Much against his will Jemmy Fox perceived that there was nothing for it but to give those two rogues a wide berth for the present, keep his own counsel most jealously, and be ready to meet them at Perlycross fair. And even so, on his long homeward ride he thought that the prospect was brightening in the west, and that he with his name cleared might come forward, and assert his love for the gentle Nicie.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TWO PUZZLES.

"THEN if I understand aright, Lady Waldron, you wish me to drop all further efforts for the detection of

those miscreants? And that too at the very moment when we had some reason to hope that we should at last succeed. And all the outlay, which is no trifle, will have been simply thrown away! This course is so extraordinary, that you will not think me inquisitive if I beg you to explain it."

Mr. Webber, the lawyer, was knitting his forehead, and speaking in a tone of some annoyance, and much doubt as to the correctness of his own reluctant inference. Meanwhile the Spanish lady was glancing at him with some dismay, and then at Mr. Penniloe, who was also present, for the morning's discussion had been of business matters.

"No, I doubt very much if you quite comprehend," she answered, with Mr. Penniloe's calm eyes fixed upon her. "I did not propose to speak entirely like that. What I was desirous of describing to you is, that to me it is less of eagerness to be going on with so much haste until the return of my dear son. He for instance will direct things, and with his great,—great command of the mind, will make the proceedings to succeed, if it should prove possible for the human mind to do it. And there is no one in this region that can refuse him anything."

Mr. Penniloe saw that she spoke with some misgivings, and shifted her gaze from himself to the lawyer and back again, with more of enquiry, and less of dictation, than her usual tone conveyed.

"The matter is entirely one for your ladyship's own decision," replied Mr. Webber, beginning to fold up the papers he had submitted. "Mr. Penniloe has left that to us, as was correct, inasmuch as it does not concern the trust. I will stop all enquiries at once, upon receiving your instructions to that effect."

"But—but I think you do not well comprehend. Perhaps I could more clearly place it with the use of my own tongue. It is nothing more than this. I wish that my dear son

should not give up his appointment as officer, and come back to this country for altogether nothing. I wish that he should have the delight of thinking that—that it shall be of his own procuration to unfold this mysterious case. Yes, that is it, that is all that I wish, to let things wait a little, until my son comes."

If either of her listeners had been very keen, or endowed with the terrier-nose of suspicion, he would have observed perhaps that the lady had found some relief from an after-thought, and was now repeating it as a happy hit. But Mr. Penniloe was too large, and Mr. Webber too rough of mind, in spite of legal training, to pry into a lady's little turns of thought.

"Very well, madam," said the lawyer, rising, "that finishes our business for to-day, I think. But I beg to congratulate you on your son's return. I cannot call to mind that I have heard of it before. Every one will be delighted to see him; even in his father's time everybody was full of him. When may we hope to see him, Lady Waldron?"

"Before very long, I have reason for good hope," the lady replied, with a smile restoring much of the beauty of her careworn face. "I have not heard the day yet; but I know that he will come. He has to obtain permission from all the proper authorities, of course. And that is like your very long and very costly processes of the Great British law, Mr. Webber. But now I will entreat of you to excuse me any more; I have given very long attention. Mr. Webber, will you then oblige me by being the host to Mr. Penniloe? The refreshment is in the approximate room."

"Devilish fine woman," Mr. Webber whispered, as her ladyship sailed away. "Wonderfully clever too! How she does her w's—I don't know much about them, but I always understood that there never was any one born out of England who could

make head or tail of his w's. Why, she speaks English quite like a native! But I see you are looking at me. Shocking manners, I confess, to swear in the presence of a parson, sir; though plenty of them do it—ha, ha, ha!—in their own absence, I suppose."

"It is not my presence, Mr. Webber. That makes it neither better nor worse; but the presence of God is everywhere."

"To be sure! So it is. Come into the next room. Her ladyship said we should find something there. I suppose we sha'n't see Missy though," said the lawyer as he led the parson to the luncheon-table. "She fights very shy of your humble servant now; girls never forgive that sort of thing. I don't often make such a mistake though, do I? And it was my son Waldron's fault altogether. Waldron is a sharp fellow, but not like me; can't see very far into a milestone. Pity to stop the case before we cleared Fox. I don't understand this new turn though. A straw shows the way the wind blows; something behind the scenes, Mr. Penniloe; more than meets the eye. Is it true that old Fox is dropping off the hooks?"

"If you mean to ask me, Mr. Webber, what I have heard about his state of health, I fear that there is little hope of his recovery. Dr. Fox returns to-morrow, as you may have heard through,—through your especial agents. You know what my opinion is of that proceeding on your part."

"Yes, you spoke out pretty plainly; and by George, you were right, sir! As fine a property as any in the county; I had no idea it was half as much. Why, bless my heart sir, Jemmy Fox will be worth his £8,000 a year, they tell me!"

"I am glad that his worth," Mr. Penniloe said quietly, "is sufficient *per annum* to relieve him from your very dark suspicion."

"Got me there!" replied Webber, with a laugh. "Ah, you parsons always beat the lawyers. Bury us,

don't you, if you find no other way! But we get the last fee after all; probate, sir, probate is an expensive thing. Well, I must be off; I see my gig is ready. If you can make my peace with Jemmy Fox, say a word for me. After all it looked uncommonly black, you know, and young men should be forgiving."

Scarcely had his loud steps ceased to ring when a very light pit-a-pit succeeded, and Mr. Penniloe found himself in far more interesting company. Nicie came softly, and put back her hair, and offered her lovely white forehead to be kissed, and sat down with a smile that begged pardon for a sigh. "Oh, Uncle Penniloe, I am so glad! I thought I should never have a talk with you again. My fortune has been so frightful lately; everything against me, the same as it has been with this dear little soul here."

She pointed to Jess, the wounded one, who trotted in cheerfully upon three legs, with the other strapped up in a white silk pouch. The little dog wagged her tail, and looked up at the clergyman with her large eyes full of soft gratitude and love, as by that reflex action, which a dog's eyes have without moving, they took in, and told their intense delight in that vigilant nurse, and sweet comrade, Nicie.

"Oh, she is so proud," Miss Waldron said, looking twice as proud herself; "this is the first time that she has had the privilege of going upon three legs without anybody's hand; and she does think so much of herself! Jess, go and show Uncle Penniloe what she can do now her health is coming back. Jess, go and cut a little caper,—very steadily, you know, for fear of going twisty; and keep her tail up, all the time! Now, Jess, come, and have a pretty kiss, because she has earned it splendidly."

"She takes my breath away, because she is so good," continued Nicie, leaning over her. "I have

studied her character for six weeks now, and there is not a flaw to be found in it, unless it is a noble sort of jealousy. Pixie,"—here Jess uttered a sharp small growl, and showed a few teeth as good as ever—"I must not mention his name again, because it won't do to excite her; but he is out in the cold altogether, because he has never shown any heroism. No, no, he sha'n't come, Jesse; he is locked up for want of chivalry. Oh, Uncle Penniloe, there is one question I have long been wanting to ask you. Do you think it possible for even God to forgive the man,—the brute I mean—who slashed this little dear like that, for being so loving and so true?"

"My dear child," Mr. Penniloe replied, "I have just been saying to myself, how like your dear father you are growing,—in goodness and kindness of face, I mean. But when you look like that, the resemblance is quite lost. I should never have thought you capable of such a ferocious aspect."

"Ah, that is because you don't know what I can do." But as she spoke, her arched brows were relaxing, and her flashing eyes filled with their usual soft gleam. "You forget that I am half a Spaniard still, or at any rate a quarter one, and therefore I can be very terrible sometimes. Ah, you should have seen me the other day; I let somebody know who I am! He thought perhaps that butter wouldn't melt in my mouth. Did not I astonish him, the impertinent low wretch?"

"Why, Nicie, this is not at all like you! I always quote you as a model of sweet temper. Who can have aroused your angry passions thus?"

"Oh, never mind. I should like to tell you, and I want to tell you very much; but I am not permitted, though I don't know why. My mother has begged me particularly not to speak of that man who came,—gentleman, I suppose he would call himself—but there, I am telling you

all about him! And mother is so different, and so much more humble now. If she were still as unfair as she was, I should not be so particular. But she seems to be so sad, and so mysterious now, without accusing any one. And so I will not say a word against her orders. You would not wish it, Uncle Penniloe, I am sure."

"Certainly not, my dear; I will not ask another question. I have noticed that your mother is quite different myself. I hope she is not falling into really bad health."

"No, I don't think that; but into frightfully low spirits. We have enough to account for that, haven't we, Uncle Penniloe? To think of my dear father, all this time! What can I do? I am so wretchedly helpless. I try to trust in God, and to say to myself—'What does the earthly part matter, after all? When the soul is with the Lord, or only waiting for His time, and perhaps rewarded all the better—because—because of wicked treatment here.' But oh, it won't do, Uncle Penniloe, it won't, when I think how noble and how good he was, and to be treated in that way! And then I fall away, and cry, and sob, and there comes such a pain—such a pain in my heart, that I have no breath left, and can only lie down, and pray that God would take me to my father. Is it wicked? I suppose it is; but how am I to help it?"

"No, my dear, it is not wicked to give way sometimes." The parson's voice was tremulous at sight of her distress, and remembrance of his own not so very long ago. "Sorrow is sent to all of us, and doubtless for our good; and if we did not feel it, how could we be at all improved by it? But you have borne it well, my child; and so has your good mother, considering how the first sad blow has been doubled and prolonged so strangely. But now it will be better for you, ever so much better, Nicie, with your dear brother home again."

"But when will that be? Perhaps

not for years. We do not even know where he is. They were not likely to stay long in Malta; he may be at the Cape of Good Hope by this time, if the ship has had long enough to get there. Everything seems to be so much against us."

"Are you sure that you are right, my dear?" Mr. Penniloe asked with no little surprise. "From what your mother said just now, I hoped that I should see my old pupil very soon."

"I am afraid not, Uncle Penniloe. My dear mother seems to confuse things a little, or not quite to understand them; through her late illness, no doubt it is. We have not had a word from Tom, since that letter which had such a wonderful effect, as I told you, when you were gone to London. And then, if you remember, he had no idea how long they were to be at Valetta. And he said nothing about their future movements very clearly; so full of his duties, no doubt, that he had no time to write long particulars. Even now he may never have heard of,—of what has happened, and our sad condition. They may have been at sea, ever since he wrote; soldiers can never tell where they may have to be."

"That has always been so, and is a part of discipline;" the parson was thinking of the centurion and his men. "But even if your letter should have gone astray, they must have seen some English newspapers, I should think."

"Tom is very clever, as you know, Uncle Penniloe; but he never reads a word when he can help it. And besides that, it is only fair to remember that he is under Government. And the Government never neglects an opportunity of turning right into left, and the rest upside down. If all the baggage intended for their draft was sent to the West Indies, because they were ordered to the East, it ought to follow that their letters would go too. But the worst of it is that one cannot be sure they

will stick to a mistake, after making it."

"It is most probable that they would; especially if it were pointed out to them. Your dear father told me that they never forgive anybody for correcting them. But how then could your mother feel so sure about Tom's coming home almost immediately?"

"It puzzles me, until I have time to think," answered Nicie, looking down. "She has never said a word to me about it, beyond praying and hoping for Tom to come home. Oh, I know, or at least I can guess, how! She may have had a dream; she believes firmly in her dreams, and she has not had time to tell me yet."

Mr. Penniloe had no right to seek further, and no inclination so to do. The meanest and most sneaking understrapper of that recent addition to our liberal institutions, the "Private Enquiry Firm," could never have suspected Nicie Waldron, after looking at her, of any of those subterfuges, which he (like a slack-skinned worm) wriggles into. But on the other hand who could suppose that Lady Waldron would endeavour to mislead her own man of business by a trumpery deceit? And yet who was that strange visitor, of whom her daughter was not allowed to speak?

Unable to understand these things, the curate shortly took his leave, being resolved, like a wise man, to think as little as he could about them, until Time, that mighty locksmith at whom even Love rarely wins the latest laugh, should bring his skeleton key to bear on the wards of this enigma. What else can a busy man do, when puzzled even by his own affairs? And how much more must it be so in the business of other persons, which he doubts his right to meddle with? Perhaps it would have been difficult to find any male member of our race more deeply moved by the haps and mishaps of

his fellow-creatures than this parson of Perlycross; and yet he could take a rosier view for most of them than they took for themselves. So when he left the grounds of Walderscourt, he buttoned up his spencer, and stepped out bravely, swinging his stick vigorously, and trusting in the Lord.

"What did 'e hat me vor, like that?" cried a voice of complaint from a brambled ditch, outside a thick copse known as Puddicombe Wood. Mr. Penniloe had not got his glasses on, and was grieved to feel rather than to see, although he was at the right end of his stick, that he had brought it down (with strong emphasis of a passage in his coming sermon) on the head of a croucher in that tangled ditch. "Oh, I beg your pardon! I am so sorry; I had not the least idea there was anybody there. I was thinking of the sower, and the tares that choke the seed. But get up, and let me see what I have done. What made you hide yourself down there? I am not the gamekeeper. Why, it is Sam Speccotty! Poaching again, I am afraid, Sam. But I hope I have not hurt you so very much."

"Bruk' my head in two, that's what you have done, Passon. Oh, you can't goo to tell on me, after hatting me on the brains with club-stick! Ooh, ooh, ooh! I be goeing to die I be."

"Speccotty, no lies, and no shamming!" Mr. Penniloe put on his spectacles, for he knew his customer well enough,—a notorious poacher, but very seldom punished, because he was considered "a natural." "This is no club-stick, but a light walking-stick; and between it and your head there was a thick briar, as well as this vast mop of hair. Let me see what you have got under that tree-root."

Sam had been vainly endeavouring to lead his minister away from his own little buried napkin, or rather sack of hidden treasure. "Turn it

out," commanded the parson surprised at his own austerity. "A brace of cock-pheasants, a couple of wood-cocks, two couple of rabbits, and a leash of hares! Oh Sam, Sam, what have you done! Speccotty, I am ashamed of you!"

"Bain't no oother chap within ten maile," said Speccotty, regarding the subject from a different point of view, "as could a' doood that since dree o'clock this marnin'; now Passon, do 'e know of wan?"

"I am happy to say that I do not, neither do I wish for his acquaintance. Give up your gun, Sam. Even if I let you off, I insist upon your tools, as well as all your plunder."

"Han't a got no goon," replied the poacher, looking slyly at the parson, through the rough shock of his hair. "Never vired a goon, for none on 'un; knows how to vang 'un wi'out thickey."

"I can well believe that." Mr. Penniloe knew not a little of poachers from his boyish days, and was not without that secret vein of sympathy for them which every sportsman has, so long as they elude and do not defy the law. "But I must consider what I shall do. Send all this to my house to-night, that I may return it to the proper owners. Unless you do that, you will be locked up to-morrow."

"Oh Passon, you might let me have the roberts, to make a few broth for my old moother."

"Not a hair, nor a feather shall you keep. Your mother shall have some honest broth,—but none of your stolen rabbits, Speccotty. You take it so lightly, that I fear you must be punished."

"Oh don't 'e give me up, sir. Oh, my poor head do go round so! Don't 'e give me up, for God's sake, Passon. Two or dree things I can tell 'e, as 'e 'd give the buttons off thy coat to know on. Do 'e mind when the Devil was seen on Hagdon Hill, the day avore the good lady varled all down the Harseshoe?"

"I do remember hearing some

foolish story, Sam, and silly people being frightened by some strange appearances, very easily explained, no doubt."

"You volk, as don't zee things, can make 'un any colour to your own liking. But I tell 'e old Nick goood into the body of a girt wild cat up there; and to this side of the valley, her be toorned to a black dog. Zayeth so in the Baible, don't 'un!"

"I cannot recall any passage, Sam, to that effect; though I am often surprised by the knowledge of those who use Holy Scripture for argument much more freely than for guidance. And I fear that is the case with you."

"Whuther a' dooded it, or whuther a' did not, I be the ekal of 'un, that I be. When her coom to me a gapin'

and a yawnin', I up wi' bill-hook, and I g'ied 'un zummat. If 'tis gone back to hell 'a harth, a' wun't coom out again, I reckon, wi'out Sam Spec-cotty's mark on 'un. 'Twill zave 'e a lot of sarmons, Passon. Her 'on't want no more knocking on the head this zide of Yester, to my reckoning. Hor! Passon be gone a'ready; a' don't want to hear of that. Taketh of his trade away. Ah, I could tell 'un zomethin', if a' wadn't such a softie."

Mr. Penniloe had hastened on, and no longer swung his holly-stick; not through fear of knocking any more skulking poachers on the head, but from the sadness which always fell upon him at thought of the dark and deadly blow the Lord had been pleased to inflict on him.

(To be continued.)

THE PORTRAIT OF A MOONSHEE.

"A MOONSHEE wishes for an interview," the messenger said.

"Does he have a chair?"

"He has never been before; but doubtless he does not have one."

"Show him in."

The place was the ancient Hindoo city of Muttra, and the time was early November. French windows opened into the garden, and a sweet scent came in from the white trumpet-shaped flowers of two lofty Millingtonias (a genus of bignonia) then just in bloom.

A man of middle height entered, rather strongly built, but not portly. He wore on his head a small, compact turban, and was plainly dressed in white, with a dark buckram jacket underneath, for the mornings were fresh. His rosary of a hundred beads hung from his side, tucked into his waistband. He was very modest, too much so indeed, putting a single finger to his lip instead of "no," speaking softly, and lifting the hem of his linen coat to his mouth if a smile overtook him. On enquiring into his antecedents, I found that he had been a Moonshee to one or two officers, especially to a certain Colonel Allgood, but had lately kept a school with little pecuniary success. And, having heard that the person he was calling upon had a taste for picking up old customs, adages, proverbs, &c., he had paid his visit to enquire whether he could be of any service. The answer was that as Muttra was such a renowned place among the Hindoos, and in the heart of the country especially connected with the myth of Krishna (the district of the twenty-four woods), it seemed advisable to use the opportunity for collecting Hindoo folk-lore, and it was feared such information would not interest him. He replied

that certainly the absurdities of idol-worshippers had not engaged his attention, but in the particular of proverbs he would be able to supply materials, and highly pleased to do so. As it was found he did not want anything, he was asked to take a chair, but shook his head deprecatingly; and, at length, under friendly pressure, sat down cross-legged on the carpet. When his face came thus more completely in view, it was observed that his features were of the modified Afghan type, which indicates some connection with the Islam of foreign origin.

The time at which this intercourse commenced may be roughly designated as before the Mutiny. That tremendous outbreak is still the epoch by which dates are fixed by the illiterate—before the Mutiny, or some ten years after the Mutiny, and so on; and the siege of Bhurtpore in 1826 had, in that part of India, previously served a similar purpose. This method of reckoning seems to have been always Oriental. The prophet Amos, when specifying the period of his first divine impulse, says that it was two years before the Earthquake.

The Moonshee's name was Kurood-Deen, which being interpreted signifies the Moon of the Faith, the faith, that is, of Islam; and it may be at once admitted that he knew nothing about the religion, literature, or philosophy of his compatriots, the Hindoos; nor, indeed, was he willing to allow that anything existed among them worth the attention of intelligent students. It seemed useless, therefore, to employ his aid in collecting the information then in view. However, his scale of remuneration was so modest, and his programme of instruction so easy and enticing, that

terms were eventually agreed upon, and he took his place in the household as a familiar figure. He was a correct Persian scholar and well versed in the higher Oordoo, but very slightly acquainted with Arabic. He had been taught, however, to read the sacred language aloud, with the proper pronunciation, but without understanding it at all. The blind are often trained to become reciters of the Koran, and will complete it during Ramazan, within a given time. Such practices draw near the prayer-wheel of Thibet.

In mentioning the plan of study proposed by Kumr-ood-Deen, it must not be supposed that its merely dilettante character escaped notice. There is no primrose path to learning; but the idea rose out of confessions freely made. The disposal of time did not admit of much leisure. First, there was the daily task, next, a curiosity after customs and habits, and lastly a portion of the day distinctly claimed for folly. "Never forget Folly (*Nicht ohne Narrheit*)" had been a motto adopted from Mr. Merryman in the Prologue for the Theatre, with a view to the health both of mind and body.

The Moonshee's proposal then was, that he should read certain Oordoo books, almost entirely of a poetical kind, and cull out of them the effective passages. There was to be a short lesson before breakfast, in which the general character of the book should be described with illustrative anecdotes of the writer. The full meaning of the extracts was to be pointed out, and if anything of force or beauty came to light, it was to be copied into a commonplace book. It may be mentioned here that the assistance in proverbs did not come to much; the selector introduced many which were found to be translations from the Arabic, and more confusing than useful.

Kumr-ood-Deen's curriculum was an effeminate one. The student was to be nurtured on anthology; no solid food in the diet, only whipped creams.

But the old man held his post for years, and the unscholarlike sipping went on too; and though much was speedily forgotten, some little superficial knowledge must have been attained. Elderly would be a fitter term than old, for my tutor was not fifty when he first appeared; but his profession of schoolmaster and his shaven head gave him an occasional aspect of gravity befitting a veteran.

It would be out of place to dwell on treasures discovered during the studies, but two brief specimens may be given, where both thought and form appeal in some degree to Western taste. Both, it is believed, are from the pen of Mahommed Ruffee of Lucknow, whose poetical name was Souda, or Madness, and who flourished between 1710 and 1780.

Betimes.

Create, if so you can,
When youth is bright;
Long is the revel's plan,
And swift the night.

The translation is quite literal; the following, though a little more free, preserves the refrain exactly.

Transience.

The bubble on the flowing stream
Stays, stays, but does not stay;
Dew on the rose in morning's beam
Stays, stays, but does not stay.
Ah! precious life, so thy sweet dream
Stays, stays, but does not stay.

It was soon found that Kumr-ood-Deen had received impressions from the aforesaid Colonel Allgood (the name has been altered) which were never likely to pass away. The Moonshee had been a sort of secretary to the Colonel *sahib*, and had written letters for him in his pursuit of knowledge, for he was an archaeologist especially addicted to old coins. The secretary thought this passion frivolous. There might be interest in the coins of Mahomedan kings, but what money the idol-worshippers may have struck before the coming of Mustapha seemed a matter of profound indifference. It was not, how

ever, the Colonel's curiosity which excited admiration, but his firmness, his decision and bravery, above all, his justice.

"He begged a coolie's pardon one day," exclaimed his eulogist, with raised eyebrows, "when he had wrongly accused him through misinformation!"

It has always seemed encouraging to think that the desire of integrity need not perish, that it may drop seed and propagate itself; and that, perhaps, a good life does as much to consolidate the British power as prowess in arms. It is really true that though the Colonel was dead before the call at Muttra, Kurnood-Deen guided himself very much by his former patron, and, as shall be shown directly, was kept out of trouble during the Mutiny by the recollection of his character.

News of the studies having spread among the educated curious in the city, visits were paid by Mahommedan officials, pleaders, and others, of whose poetical achievements no suspicion had ever previously existed. Conversation on ordinary topics would proceed, and then suddenly the morning caller would look shy, and with some confusion disclose that he was *Lion*, or *Witness*, or *Spark*, or some other of the strange appellations the rhyming brotherhood assume when they put on their singing-robos. Some poems were still in manuscript, and a desire was shown to recite them; others had reached lithography and were collected in a *Deewan*. One gentleman edited a magazine in prose, with a healthy circulation of thirty-five, and invited contributions. With the aid of the Moonshee's pen one was sent on the electric telegraph, and appeared next to an article on Seth the third son of Adam, who, it was stated, had received no less than fifty short revelations from the Supreme Being. Thus strangely do the centuries clash in the circumstances of our position in India. The tolerable, or intolerable, poetry of my visitors imitated Persian forms, and

made use of Sooffee extravagances about the beloved one, the cup-bearer, the tavern-keeper, and all the rest of it, but appeared wholly insincere and inanimate.

Kurnood-Deen, when he had laid aside his modesty, was by no means free from some theatrical affectations. One morning he came in obviously excited and disturbed; he frequently covered his mouth, and shook as with intellectual effervescence. As he clearly wished to be asked what was the matter, the question was put, and it turned out that he had been perusing the writings of Jafur Zuttullee, or Jafur the buffoon, whose extreme facetiousness was the cause of this pantomime; and, indeed, he mentioned that the recital of portions of this humourist in a party of friends was apt to produce rolling and convulsions, not without danger of internal rupture. As Jafur, however, took a broader view of life than is considered admissible at the present epoch, he need not be quoted, nor would his name have been mentioned, except for one circumstance. M. Garcin de Tassy, in his *History of Hindoostanee Literature*, does not mention Jafur's macaronics. It may contribute an item to the biography of that curious description of composition, to record that Jafur (who wrote in the time of our Queen Anne and the First George) concocted a mixture of Persian and Oordoo exactly on the lines of the piece which commences *Trumpeter unus erat qui coatum scarlet habebat*.

The Moonshee has been shown in his assumed mood of merriment; once or twice he offered an extraordinary imitation of juvenility. On a certain occasion he entered with his youth renewed like that of the eagle. The henna on his beard was replaced by a deep blue dye; his eyes were surrounded by rims of *soorma*, his cheeks were slightly raddled, and he had supplied a prominent gap with the oddest false tooth ever beheld. It was far smaller than the two between which it was most imperfectly suspended by

a string, and oscillated with every word spoken, like a child in a swing. His mood was to babble of erotic verse; and the schoolmaster turned dandy evidently thought that his appearance would do mischief among susceptible hearts, and that he should not escape significant glances from the jealousies.

Seeing me at times desirous of keeping up my classics, the Moonshce was curious about Greek. He could scarcely believe that sane histories and artistic poetry still remained as relics of the Ionians, and was more disposed to view their country as Wonderland. For the Arabians have done for Greek history, especially the period of Alexander, what Geoffrey of Monmouth did for that of Britain; they have filled it with myth and magic and incongruities. And as Colonel Allgood did not appear to have kept up his Greek, Kumr-ood-Deen looked on the strange characters of my Sophocles as decidedly dubious, and concluded that the Colonel would not have received them. Iflaton (Plato) and others had been heard of certainly, but were now considered to exist only in the world of anecdote.

The conversation often turned on religion, though not in the way of controversy. The Moonshce was very desirous that it should be understood that Islam accepted Jesus, and ranked him among the six prophets to whom special titles had been given. As Adam was called the Chosen of God and Abraham His friend, and so on, in like manner Jesus was the Spirit of God.

A celebrated Mahommedan divine having come to Agra (which was our home after Muttra), it was announced that he would preach weekly in the large mosque. Kumr-ood-Deen was asked to attend on the first Friday, and to take notes of the sermon. The discourse proved to treat chiefly of the character of Jesus, of whom a singular anecdote was given. The Son of Mary, so the legend ran, was wandering in the desert, when a light

shone around Him, and a voice from the heavens asked "Hast thou perfect trust in Me?" The answer was, "Perfect trust in Thee, my Father and my Guide." Three times in all was this question put, and three times the same answer was returned. Then the voice enquired, "What is that in the hem of thy garment?" "A needle, Lord," was the reply. "For what purpose?" "To mend the garment, should it become frayed or torn." "And I," said the voice, "on whom all animate creatures wait for their simplest needs, could not I mend thy garment or guard it from injury?" On this story (so curiously misrepresenting our Lord's real teaching) the preacher made the comment that though Jesus was a prominent link in the chain of the prophets, he could not be the last. One more was wanted, and Mustapha came.

Kumr-ood-Deen, though anxious to admit his English fellow-student to a certain degree of brotherhood, as belonging to the "people of the book," that is, to those who recognise revelation, still, in his heart (as was natural) he set him down as a reprobate and an infidel for not receiving the Koran. He was reminded one day that the Colonel *sahib* was probably also an unbeliever. His reply was that the Colonel never spoke on religious subjects, but that doubtless so powerful a mind would have accepted the whole truth had it been presented to him, and not a part only.

Surprise was once expressed that I should know anything at all about Moslem history, and on my showing the Moulavee Ockley's work on the Saracens as one of the sources of information, he observed that the restlessness of the foreign mind was unparalleled. Unfortunately, in displaying the book I pointed out the engraving of Mahommed which served as frontispiece. It is mentioned in the Traditions that the Prophet cursed painters of the human form, and portraits are therefore held unlawful. When I looked to see how the likeness

was admired, the Moonshee had covered his eyes with his hands, and was undergoing a moral shock.

He declared frankly one day that he never could profess Christianity, on account of its containing a strictly forbidden doctrine. This was found to be Participation, or the sharing in divine attributes, which is of course admitted in the doctrine of the Trinity. He had the curiosity also to ask whether the divinity of Jesus was an absolutely indispensable belief. Hearing that it was considered the corner-stone of the whole fabric, he lowered his eyes and remained silent.

The Moonshee grew very gloomy sometimes over the end of the world. There is a division in the Koran, which had been expounded to him, entitled the Chapter of the Inevitable, in which both heaven and hell are described; and again from tradition and theological treatises may be gathered many terrifying signs which are to precede the Day of Account. One which had particularly seized on the Moonshee's mind was a sweeping wind which was to blow over the earth for many days, and which no heart but one largely endowed with faith could bear up against; one of our biting east winds in March might give some notion of it. The Moonshee said that, when he thought that this bleak blast might come in his days, he felt disposed to rush into the wilds, and tear his clothes in madness and despair.

Once he gave way to an extraordinary outburst of fanaticism. We had been speaking of the place of torment, and the remark was made with regard to the millions of idol-worshippers, that a merciful God would doubtless make some gracious allowance for their ignorance of the truth. At this observation Kummood-Deen was roused into unusual animation. "Why should they be spared?" he cried. "They have had thousands of prophets sent them, and more than three hundred apostles, and over a century of revelations, small

and great; and yet they have not repented or believed. Most justly, and without a shadow of a doubt, they will all be precipitated into the Fire." One could not but recollect the calm stage-direction in an old miracle-play of the Ten Virgins, preparatory to a closing scene of glory: *The foolish virgins are swept into the abyss.*

The Night of Power occurs in Ramazan, after sunset of one of five days towards the end, but which of them is not known. For one second in that night the brute creation and the vegetable kingdom bow in recognition of their Maker, and the salt water of the sea becomes sweet. As only the Prophet and some of his companions were entrusted with the exact date, it is a night of mystery as well as of power. Kummood-Deen related that his father, some years back, had only just missed witnessing the act of recognition. The last ten days of the month, as pious people are wont to do, he passed in retreat, and was alone at midnight in a little court where there was a solitary Melia tree. The old sheikh had hung his linen coat on a branch, before kneeling in prayer. The night was still, and the devotion long; some natural weariness was felt, when suddenly a slender sound was heard. The devotee turned, and saw his coat on the ground. The tree had bowed to the power of God, and had dislodged the garment. Oh that he had turned sooner! He would have witnessed that beautiful courtesy of obeisance which so many had desired to see, and had not seen.

Sometimes we touched on science, and an attempt was made to give some rough idea of the great discoveries of the age, and the changes they had brought about. They did not greatly impress the Moonshee, nor do they impress Mahomedans generally; partly from that belief in the unconditioned power of God which is at the root of their fatalism, and partly because the contemplative mind of the East looks beyond mere physical im-

provements. Kumr-ood-Deen received my realistic fairy-tales with the acquiescent remark that God was omnipotent; who were we that we should wonder at His caprice or His capacity? But he further observed that the leading contingencies of life were not affected by material progress. People were still led away by love or covetousness, were still subject to accidents and illness, and were still finally destroyed by death, in the most splendid cities as well as in the desert. And then, to the best men, the dervish and the saint, what was fast travelling, or the telegraph, or luxury, or comfort? The contemplation of the Supreme Being had no need of these things. Occasionally the argument about the Divine Power was used to turn the tables against the repudiation of wonders. For the Moonshee was a firm supporter of alchemy and the transmutation of metals, an art which is neither recognised nor prohibited by the expounders of the sacred code. During an exposition of this mysterious craft, incredulity was perhaps observable on the countenance of the hearer, for the Moonshee cried out: "Why should not such a science exist? With God all things are possible." The answer was given that it was not the impossibility of the fact, but the imperfections of the evidence which created the stumbling-block. To this the disputant replied that, having repeatedly witnessed the alchemistic experiments carried to a successful issue, he was not at liberty to reject the theory, and that even among the most advanced Franks the evidence of the senses would probably still be received.

So these readings and talkings were continued through a long period of time and at various places, and indeed in special circumstances on journeys. A tour was made one winter to enquire into the condition of certain canal-lands which had been affected by an efflorescence of salts, and the Moonshee accompanied. The road lay north of Delhi and took us through

Paniput, where the shrine of the celebrated saint was an object of great interest, though his recorded exploits and eccentricities a little ruffled the Moonshee's equanimity. He had a small tent of his own, a pony and a boy to look after it, and this youth was a source of much amusement. His faculty of misunderstanding and gift for blundering were quite abnormal. Wullee was his name (not connected with the Scotch abbreviation of William), and some notes were put on paper of his adventures. He would take the pony away from the river to water it in the jungle, and return long after with his mission still unaccomplished from not having been able to come upon a tank. Scores of miles did that lad unnecessarily walk, from starting originally in a wrong direction. There was no article which, in its turn, had not been left behind by him. Lastly, gazing at a flight of birds, he was precipitated into a bullock-run, in a field where irrigation was going on. When the Moonshee was told that a similar accident had befallen a Greek philosopher who, too intent on astronomy, had stepped into a well, he was greatly delighted with the anecdote, and booked it at once for frequent reproduction.

At last the Mutiny came upon us, and for a long time we were entirely separated; but when matters settled again, Kumr-ood-Deen returned to me. He had been in Rohilkhund, and he declared that the imbecility of the rebel leaders had convinced him that nothing could be done against the English. When he considered that the resource and self-confidence of one single Colonel Allgood would have been more than a match for a durbar of these bewildered authorities, he determined quietly to await the end. The race that produced Allgoods would not be easily worsted. He lived in a little house in retirement, and his next door neighbours, a man and wife, were quarrelling one day, when the

husband was heard to say very impolitely: "You had better take care. I can crack your skull and throw you into a hole now. There is no British Government to ask questions."

The Mutiny was an endless source of regret to the old man. "The former state of things will never return," he said. It never has done so. He related that a gentleman, with whom we were both acquainted, had turned ferocious during the disturbances from sleeping on a tiger's skin; that he barked occasionally, committed murders, and was not to be tamed. This dangerous animal still haunts the Oriental Club in Hanover Square, and does not seem to be the object of the least alarm to the porter.

Books and manuscripts had all been burnt or buried in the ground by the insurgents; our slipshod studies, however, were gradually resumed on much the same lines. But Kumr-ood-Deen was getting past his time. He was growing weary and uninterested; and at length an arrangement was made by which his son was to have some employment and himself occasional pecuniary aid, and he retired to Muttra where we had first met. The paper currency (which seemed to him

a transparent fraud), the agricultural exhibitions (in his view feasts of the Barmecides), rationalism among his co-religionists, sanitation, female education,—all these degenerate subjects perplexed and saddened the old school-master's mind, and he was not sorry to reach home, and to spread his prayer-carpet on the platform of the little mosque near which he lived.

He did not last long. The Mahomedan grave-yards are often by the way-side, rough, untended enclosures shadowed by a few wan trees. It is the custom to put a rudely-sculptured pen-case on the tombs of the learned. Beneath the emblem of his life's employment, Kumr-ood-Deen now awaits explanations.

On my table lie some Oordoo verses copied in his choice calligraphy. Their quotation will not leave a wrong impression, for it is certainly to be believed that the sentiments which most readily touch the Moslem heart bear on them the sorrowful hues of pessimism. The lines are by Souda, and may be thus rendered:

One spot in the desolate world
Alone can be counted as blest,
Where those who have spoken are still,
And those who have striven at rest.

J. W. SHERER.

SOME THOUGHTS ON ST. FRANCIS.

AN English poet (we were told not long ago), on being asked by a friend, "What is it in Dante's face that is wanting in Goethe's?" answered, "The divine."

When we look at the commonplace portraits in an exhibition of modern paintings, what a consolation to turn from them, and see again, with the eye of the mind, such a face as St. Bonaventure's in the *Disputa* of Raphael, or the noble head of St. Dominic as it has come to us through the art of Angelico. It is because these faces bear the stamp of the divine that the remembrance of them is always a solace. In like manner, after reading the biography of any ordinary man who has succeeded in the world (there is certainly no dearth of such biographies), how soothing to let one's thoughts wander to St. Charles Borromeo or St. Francis of Assisi! And it is not morbid nor sentimental; it is merely a natural reaction in the presence of a narrow type. With the material triumphs, the complexity of life, the hurry and deafening noise of our age, what a distance are we from St. Francis; how far from us those modest graces of the spirit which were dear to him! Was he, this Umbrian vision of sanctity, only a foolish dreamer or a madman? And are we on the way to a better resting place for the spirit, by means of the mastery we are gaining over the forces of nature? Forty years ago the men of science believed so; even they however at last are losing hope. Is it possible after all that the day of the saints is coming?

We will not attempt to read the future; let us be content to look at the past or the present, in so far as St. Francis is concerned.

It cannot be ill to follow in this

place the example of a reverend Franciscan, who begins his life of the saint by quoting this fine passage from Dante:

Between Tupino, and the wave that falls
From blest Ubaldo's chosen hill, there
hangs

Rich slope of mountain high, whence heat
and cold

Are wafted through Perugia's eastern gate:
And Nocera with Gualdo in its rear,

Mourn for their heavy yoke. Upon that
side,

Where it doth break its steepness most,
arose

A sun upon the world, as duly this
From Ganges doth: therefore let none

who speak
Of that place, say Ascesi; for its name

Were lamely so delivered; but the East,
To call things rightly, be it henceforth
styled.¹

The name of his family is usually given as Bernardoni; but the aforesaid Franciscan calls it Moriconi. The father of Francis, he says, "Pietro Bernardo Moriconi, better known under the name of Pietro Bernardoni, was a rich merchant from Lucca, who had recently settled in Assisi; he did a large trade with France. The mother of Francis was Pica, of the noble Provençal family of Bourlemont; and by her piety she was worthy to be the mother of a saint. Pica had two children, Francis and Angelo; the latter married, and members of the family of Moriconi were living at Assisi in the first half of the fifteenth century."² It is likely that the only schoolmasters of Francis were the humble priests of the neighbourhood; his purely intellectual discipline was always slender, but it was not in this sphere that his victories were to be

¹ *Paradise*; canto xi., in Cary's translation.

² *Saint François d'Assise*. Paris, 1885.

won. Some of his biographers have said that his youth was irregular, given up to rioting and mad pleasure; while St. Bonaventure on the other hand makes out that Francis was called by the divine grace from his birth. The truth is with neither; Francis in his youth was a virtuous lover of pleasure, with the soul of a poet, full of tenderness and charity. He had, however, no capacity for business, and he was lavish in his expenditure, which gave offence to his thrifty father. The father has suffered a great deal of abuse, but there is no evidence that he merited it; the man of business in such a case is as likely to take a right view as the saint.

In Italy at that day town armed itself against town and village against village, for the titled ruffians were ever at war with one another; in one of these civil broils Francis was taken prisoner and remained in captivity about a year. His vocation was not yet clear to him, and for a while after his release we find him following the profession of arms, without any apparent zest in the calling. He returned at length to Assisi, and was to help his father there. The story of their last quarrel will show what sort of a man of business Francis was likely to make. He had a vision in which he was told it was the will of God that he should rebuild the church of St. Damian, then in decay. Going at this time with merchandise to a neighbouring place, he called at St. Damian's on the way home, and begged the priest to accept, towards rebuilding the church, all the money he had received for the goods. The priest wisely refused the gift, but Francis left the money in the church, or within the precincts. The father of Francis was enraged at this strange conduct, and demanded that his son should publicly forswear all claim upon his estate. It was a harsh measure, yet it helped Francis to discover his true vocation. The youth appeared before the bishop of Assisi to forego his inheritance. "As soon,"

says Bonaventure, "as he came into the presence of the bishop, instantly, without speaking a word or waiting for his father's demand, he took off his clothes and returned them to his father. Then it was seen that the saintly youth under his fair garment wore a coarse hair-shirt. With wonderful fervour he turned to his father, and in presence of all thus addressed him: 'Until now I have called you my earthly father; from this day I may in truth say, "Our Father which art in heaven," in whom is all my treasure, all my trust and hope.'"

The bishop presented some clothes to the young enthusiast, and gave him also for a time work of one sort or another. After this Francis wandered abroad, depending upon the alms of the pious, or living as a hermit in the wilds. We find him nursing the lepers or tending the sick, always full of charity, always a brother to the whole race of men. Nor does he forget the words which he heard in the vision, commanding him to restore the fallen sanctuary. Other churches are built through his zeal, one of them being that of the Portiuncula (St. Mary of the Angels), destined forever to be associated with his name. One day in this place listening to the words, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves," he believes the divine voice bids him carry out to the letter this commandment of the Master. Then he took a coarse gray habit which he tied round with a cord, and this he accepted as the dress he should wear through life; he soon gained disciples, and in a few years the plain garment was known throughout Christendom.¹

¹ "The true dress of St. Francis was a cloak of the meanest material, of the colour of ashes, to which was attached a hood made in the form of a bag. . . . The dress of the Capuchins is the one which comes nearest to that of St. Francis; they have only enlarged the hood, and lengthened it, giving it a pyramidal shape."—*History of the Monastic Orders*. Paris, 1718.

Francis took to himself poverty as a bride; and to him, and to the simple and brave men who followed him, this bride was not gaunt nor grim, but holy and beautiful. They retired into the woods, to devote themselves to penance and contemplation. But to seek after perfection only from within was not a life full enough for Francis; he thought moreover that the mission had been laid upon him to proclaim to the whole race the beauty and sanctity of this strange Franciscan bride. He and his followers went therefore to Rome, to seek the Pope's permission to found a new order. That journey to Rome is not a thing to be passed over lightly: it is a great event in the history of the world. Pope Innocent the Third, at that time greatest and proudest of rulers, at first repulsed the coarsely-clad stranger who had come to ask the pontiff's sanction for a work seemingly impossible. In the end wiser counsels prevailed, and the desired permission was in part secured. The Order did not indeed receive the full papal sanction for several years, but this was freely given so soon as the success of the work was certain.

And thus began the Order of the Franciscans, which grew rapidly and soon became a great power in Europe. The friars took the usual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; and the first of these they made their own. It was their concern to give spiritual direction everywhere, but above all in the street, in the fields, and in the hovel. They told the poor, the outcast, the downtrodden, that poverty need not kill the soul; and they told of a life of poverty in Galilee twelve hundred years ago, which had since gone far to transform the world. What a wealth of spiritual emotion was scattered broadcast in Europe by those wandering friars, sworn to poverty and practising it so literally!

We do not propose to give in detail the facts of the founder's later life; an outline, however, is necessary,

else one's work may seem to be a mass of fragments, without a single quality that belongs to a picture.

Francis sent many of his friars abroad as missionaries, and he himself went to the East in 1219, hoping to win over some of the Saracens to Christianity. He won respect for himself, and this was all. Returning to Assisi he performed the duties of spiritual director¹ of his Order with ardour and with good sense, for this mystic and enthusiast was no dreamer; nay, in his own way (surely the best way in so far as the things of the spirit are concerned) he was a true man of action, clear of vision, steadfast, and of inexhaustible patience. Great were the needs to which he ministered and astonishing was the result of his work. In the religious sentiment of that day, before he set himself to renew it, there was a want of joy and freedom; and who so much as Francis gave new wings to the spirit?

The devotion, the fervour of this great soul exhausted the body, and his intense meditation upon the Passion of Our Lord left its mark on the flesh. It is said that his body bore the *stigmata*, the wounds in the side, on hands, and feet, which were borne by the Crucified One. M. Renan, in his delightful article on St. Francis, states his belief that the *stigmata* were the invention of Brother Elias, who at the time of the saint's death was General of the Order. M. Renan is intent upon proving a theory and sees only that side of the case which best fits in with this theory. The evidence for the *stigmata* is sufficient and assuring. It is the alleged element of miracle that displeased M. Renan; but if we put this element aside, there is in the legend nothing physically improbable. So ardent and sensitive a spirit as Francis, ever meditating upon the Passion of Christ, might work

¹ Francis was not himself (in name at least) General of the Order; this post was filled by Brother Elias.

through flesh, and pierce feet and hands and side, just as the legend tells us. The men of science who have tried to explain away so much in the religious sphere, have given us no help towards the solution of our difficulties; and, in spite of science, religion in the end will have its due. For men will surely see that by the very constitution of things the natural and the supernatural cannot be at war.

To show how rapidly the Order grew, we quote the following passage from a work of reference not likely to err in favour of clericalism: "Forty-two years after the death of its founder the Order numbered two hundred thousand members, and possessed eight thousand religious houses, which were scattered over twenty-three provinces." This outward success is in itself no proof of Francis's sanctity; but we have evidence of other kinds, abundant evidence, that Francis was a saint; we know too that the charm of his personality was wonderful, indescribable. So overpowering was the effect of his preaching, that the whole population of a town in Italy offered to give up their way of life in order to carry out the Franciscan doctrine of poverty in its severest form. Francis was too wise a man to permit this, for he knew that the entire work of the human race cannot be performed by monks and nuns. He met these cases, not by receiving the candidates into his own Order, but by founding a third one adapted to the needs of such as live in the world. The second Order we have not mentioned; it is that of the nuns, the Poor Clares; the third, better known as the Order of the Tertiaries, or Penitent Brethren, is not severe in its methods, but is open to all; it is for those who do their work in the ordinary paths of the world, who yet are willing to accept a rule of life, and to impose upon themselves some conditions as to their pleasures and diet, their daily habits and style of dress. Who can fulfil the law of the spirit with such a natural ease that a rule

of life is unnecessary to him? He who says so, and speaks the truth, is greater than the saints.

Francis himself at any rate felt such a need, and he claimed no indulgence by virtue of his position, nor because of his physical ailments. That slight frame, wasted by toil, fasting, and prayer, by the pains of the *stigmata*, and by meditation on the holy mysteries, was the abode of a spirit of heroic fortitude. However great his bodily weakness in the last years of his life, however keen his sufferings, his joyousness and enthusiasm never left him; and his poet's heart was true to the last, delighting in the beauties of earth and sky, and full of affection for the whole animate world. Such a depth of charity, so divine a tenderness had not been seen upon earth since the time when the fishermen of Galilee went forth to bind the world with the "cords of love."

He was forty-four years old at his death, which took place at Assisi on the 4th of October, 1226.

Let us go first to Milman for a testimony to the simple goodness of St. Francis, remembering that, whatever may have been the bias of that learned historian, it was not in favour of the exponents of Latin Christianity. "Of all saints," he says, "St. Francis was the most blameless and gentle. . . . Francis was emphatically the saint of the people, of a poetic people like the Italians. Those who were hereafter to chant the *Paradise* of Dante, or the softer stanzas of Tasso, might well be enamoured of the ruder devotional strains in the poetry of the whole life of St. Francis. The lowest of the low might find consolation, a kind of pride, in the self-abasement of St. Francis even beneath the meanest. The very name of his disciples, the Friar Minors, implied their humility. In his own eyes (says his most pious successor) he was but a sinner, while in truth he was the mirror and splendour of holiness."¹

¹ *History of Latin Christianity*; book ix. chap. 10.

St. Bonaventure (the "most pious successor" to St. Francis) could hardly have praised the founder of his Order more warmly than this. Let us go now for a testimony to a member of Francis's own Church, to Migne: "Who can measure the effect upon the manners of his time of this saint's partiality for all that was then esteemed low and base? To-day we can hardly form a just idea of the European chaos at the beginning of the thirteenth century. No settled government, no safeguards, no security for property or life. Sovereignty was derived from property; and those in power,—great in number, and independent of each other—recognised neither measure nor restraint. In a word it was the triumph of wealth and brute force, the systematic oppression of the poor and the weak; such was in that day the social condition of Europe. To this picture already so gloomy must be added all the disorders inseparable from endless and universal war; we shall then have an idea of the society to which St. Francis dared to preach of peace and brotherhood, and of detachment from worldly things. Think of the effect which would be produced by means of the triumph of these holy doctrines among a population brutalised by the excesses of the feudal system! In those barbarous times preaching had an immense importance. It will be enough to mention the case of John of Vicenza, who, by the power of his preaching, established peace for a time in most of those towns in Italy which had long been torn by civil war."¹

In Francis indeed there was none of the feudal hardness. When it was suggested to him that he should punish some of the friars for contumacy, he made this answer: "My power is a purely spiritual one. If I rule the brethren, and correct their vices, it is by spiritual means alone. For if I cannot correct them by word of mouth,

by counsel and example, at least I will not be an executioner, to punish and scourge them, as the secular powers of this age would do." That little speech shows us the purely human side of St. Francis. If we would see the religious and poetical side of his nature, we shall find its best expression in his exquisite *Song of the Creatures*. It is difficult to think that anyone can understand Francis who does not know this canticle; while surely those who do know it can never feel that "sweet St. Francis" is a stranger to them. M. Renan has said that it is, "after the Gospels, the finest instance of religious poetry, the most perfect expression given by the modern world of its feeling for religion." It was the poet in Francis that made him call the swallows his "little sisters," and led him to personify the elements; this was certainly no mere use of the rhetorician's figure *prosopopœia*, for Francis had probably never heard that unpleasant word. "The thought of the common origin of created things," says St. Bonaventure, "filled Francis with great tenderness; and he called all creatures his brothers and sisters, because they had this common origin with himself." This will perhaps make it easier to understand the imagery in the following canticle. We will follow the examples of M. Renan and Mr. Matthew Arnold, and give our translation in prose.

The Creatures' Song.

Oh Lord Most High, omnipotent good Lord, to whom is all praise, all glory, honour and blessing,—the source of everything art Thou, and none is worthy to pronounce Thy name.

Praise unto Thee, Lord God, for all Thy creatures, above all for Brother Sun, who gives us his light, who gives us the day; beautiful is he, radiant with great splendour; and he is an image of Thy glory, oh Lord!

For Sister Moon and for the Stars do we give Thee praise, which in the heavens Thou hast formed, so bright and fair.

Praise unto Thee for Brother Wind, for

¹ Migne's *Third Theological Encyclopedia*, vol. liv.

Air and Clouds, for Storm and Fair Weather; for by these are Thy creatures kept, oh Lord!

We do praise Thee for Sister Water, which is so useful to us, and humble, and precious, and so chaste.

For Brother Fire, oh Lord, we give Thee praise; by him Thou dost light up the night, and he is beautiful, friendly, and strong.

And for Mother Earth we praise Thee, —for the mother who rules over us and sustains us, who gives us many fruits, grass, and flowers of every hue.

Praised art Thou, oh Lord God, by all who through love of Thee forgive the wrong, by all who are long-suffering, and patient in tribulation, seekers after peace; in the heavens, oh Lord Most High, by Thee shall these be crowned!

And even for our Sister Death do we give Thee praise, oh Lord,—Death, from whom naught living shall escape. She bringeth woe to those who die in mortal sin! Blessed, thrice blessed, are they who die in conformity with Thy holy will; for them the second death has no terrors.

Praise ye the Lord, bless Him most thankfully; with deep humility serve ye the Lord.

The soul of St. Francis is in this canticle; joy and enthusiasm, poetry and exalted peace, humility and burning charity, all are here. Has he on the other hand any of the failings which are common to professors of religion? "Religious people nearly always think too much about themselves," says Mr. Ruskin, with whom it is pleasant to find ourselves in agreement. This is true alike of the ordinary men who live in society, and of the saints who live in solitude; and in truth nothing does so much to discredit religion in the minds of unthinking persons, as the narrowness, the pusillanimity, the overweening self-importance of too many professors of it. In St. Francis we find none of these failings; he is quite without spiritual pride; he is free from unhealthy self-consciousness, and he is humble with that unaffected humility which is so rare a virtue.

All we have quoted so far has been in favour of the saint; if he has had

detractors, we have taken too little heed of them. It is seldom we hear the note of disparagement; men of all shades of opinion join in their praises of him, and none (not even the Franciscans themselves) can claim him exclusively as their own. He has of course been called a fanatic, as Gordon was called by the hard-headed men who dwell in Philistia; need we make an ill-use of words by dealing with such a charge? The hardest saying about St. Francis which we remember to have read, described him as a mere noisy friar, a compound of Peter the Hermit and the Flagellants. The writer, we think, was an American, of Boston; is it not possible that the ideas of respectability which prevail in that city may have influenced him unduly? An apostle of respectability and culture Francis certainly was not; he was only one of the world's great and original men. Yet even if we judge him by the standard which applies to the civic functionary, Francis would stand the test, in so far as it is worth anything. He was a man of gracious manners, of knightly courtesy, whose life was without guile; is not *this* respectable? But then he paid his tailor so little!

We have said that the Franciscans took the usual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience; it was to the first of these vows that they gave a new significance. The great Order of the Jesuits would in a later day interpret anew the vow of obedience; and the other vow (that of chastity), which is so distinctly personal a thing, had already by many saints been carried to its utmost limit. The mark of the founder of the Order is seen most clearly in the Franciscan order of poverty; it is to this that he gave the genius of his individuality. No doubt it is an extreme doctrine, like the obedience which is prescribed by the Jesuits; and with the educated and uneducated world of to-day extreme forms of religious teaching are less in favour than ever. But what a depth

of meaning there is in the Franciscan view of poverty. Not because the good St. Francis was apt to regard all property as possessing some dangerous quality of unholiness; not because he despised all the comforts of life; but because, holding this doctrine and carrying it out so inflexibly, he yet lived within the sphere of heroic virtue, of heroic sanctity. After such a life, can it be said with justice that poverty must be a hindrance to the growth of the spirit?

And it is here, it seems to us, that we should seek the message of Francis to our own time. In that narrative of the saint and his first followers, with their enthusiasm and purity, their romance, their poverty and joyousness, is there not a lesson for us? To the politician, with his millennium of cakes and ale; to the man of science, with his millennium of intellect, what a better way is shown by the saint of Assisi! For it is not by means of the ballot-box, nor by a knowledge of physical laws, that you will help men to reach that land of our dreams, that home of the saints, which is the "City of God."

To preach in these days such a doctrine as that of St. Francis upon the subject of poverty, were to risk the charge of belonging to a secret society, intent upon gaining all power for the rich in order to enslave the poor. But if we look at the facts openly and fearlessly, what is it in truth that we see? Can we, by daily experience of life in human society, by the light of history, by politics or science, bring ourselves to believe that in the future course of things riches can ever be for all? Even if wealth were the only good, is it not evident the majority can never attain it? Then is it becoming, is it human to tell the poor man by way of consolation that, by cultivating the instinct of self-preservation, he too may gain riches? At the best it is only one in a hundred (in reality it is less) that can possibly reach the goal of the

moderately rich man; what will you say to all the ninety-and-nine who do not reach it? The hundredth man, who if self-made usually merits the description Heine gives of him, would have the ninety-nine find solace in meditating upon his achievements; but the humane man has other objects of veneration. His thoughts are rather with the humble souls who do not reach the goal, and he has no pride in the triumph of the one; it is after all such a paltry triumph.

Then is there in St. Francis's teaching a side which we may call modern? We need not attempt to carry out as he did the injunction: "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece." Francis himself only required it of those who had taken the vow of poverty; he had the wisdom to see that such teaching cannot be carried out by all. But it is not in this way we should approach the question, for it is not thus we shall find the message of the saints to the poor. Let us find ground that is solid, where we need fear neither the economist, the politician, nor the worldling. If then St. Francis, having made poverty his bride, having forsworn all luxury and selfish pleasure, could even in this find an extra means of quickening that life of the spirit in which the riddle of the world is solved; if thus he could spend a life so exalted, yet so full of meekness and affection, as to gain for himself an everlasting place among the comforters and helpers of the human family; if indeed this be true (and it is true), who shall say there is in the story of such a life no meaning for a generation like ours? In that tale of sanctity, what a reproach for all those among us (and great is the number of them) who are filled with envy and discontent, who cry out for luxury and vulgar pleasures, and in their despair flee for comfort to the demagogue,—in whom is no comfort. Poor trusting

souls, that give your pence to the agitator, what is your reward? Foolish talk, and vain promises, and fresh fuel for your discontent. Not through these passionate men will peace come to you; the peace you long for is the secret of the saints.

Now the controversies which to-day give an occupation and an advertisement to the leaders of the poor are, even to the poor themselves, of little more than ephemeral importance. Violent speeches in Hyde Park, and Acts of Parliament multiplied to infinity, will not go far to solve our social problems; for these problems have their origin not so much in the difficulties of our warfare with nature, as in the average man's weakness of character, the impotence of his thought, and his unwillingness to burn incense to anything better than his lower self. If you give him a vote, and tell him that he is worthy to be king of the world, you will not in reality have helped him, and you will have said what is untrue.

Does St. Francis show us a better way? Does he speak to us clearly through the centuries, in words and acts that have for us a vital meaning? In any case the story of this life, sustained at such an altitude, must ever have an interest so long as men believe there is in the world a principle higher than appetite. We may, however, feel a vague interest in him without making him a "member of our body," without bringing home to ourselves the true import of his spiritual message. The saints of the Middle Ages come to us in a haze which their modern biographers have done little to dispel; everything we read of them is dressed in phrase and imagery which once were but are no longer the vesture of living thought. In trying then to portray such a man as St. Francis, we should make a change in the garment of his own and his biographers' thought; and, unless the thought is unsound, it will stand the change. So far we have endeavoured to do this, and we will do it further

in answer to the final question, what is the message of St. Francis to the poor? For the answer is not one that can be put into a maxim, but must be sought in the spirit of his life.

Try then to see, through the mists of seven centuries, that saintly worker as he lived in Assisi. The outward man is depicted by many artists, whose portraits, faithful to the Franciscan tradition, may in a wide sense be accepted as true; there are several of them in those portions of our National Gallery which are devoted to the Italian schools of painting. The face is not one of great power, like Dante's; the features are small and perfectly regular, the eyes large and full of tenderness, the expression of the face suggestive of great meekness; it is of Tasso's type rather than Dante's. He is dressed in the coarse garb which is still worn by some of the Franciscans. Such was he outwardly; what was his way of life? His consuming desire was to shape his life by the divine pattern of the Gospels, in all things to carry out the commandments of his Master. What other saint has come so near as Francis to that condition of perfect peace and all-embracing love, that pure life of the spirit, which is to the Christian the final aim of human development?

He has forsworn luxury and pleasure, and he lives on the humblest fare; no mendicant is more sparsely fed, more coarsely clad than he. Yet in the usual sense of the word he is not an ascetic; he is light-hearted, joyous, without a touch of the gloom that overshadows so many of the spiritual sons of the great Bishop of Hippo. Francis has the lightness of soul and the soundness of feeling which belonged to the men of Galilee, and which remained a heritage in the Church, in spite of persecution, until the metaphysical spirit took possession of the province of religion. He sees things with the poets, not with the metaphysicians, and so it is well with him. For the poet sees the world of

men as it is, throbbing and alive, the other sees it only in embryo; and Francis is a poet, for he takes part with adequate emotion in the drama of human life. It is this poetic vision which gives him so unique a place; to feel with the poets and share their gift of expression, while you act with the saints, is to combine the highest and rarest of human qualities.

The victories of mind and will which are the aim of the stoic, Francis has left far behind; indeed he has never known them after Cato's manner. It is in a quite different order of thought and feeling that the spiritual life has its beginnings. The stoic has too much pride in his victory over the body; he regards it as an end in itself, and does not build thereon a house of beauty in which the spirit may dwell and rejoice. Francis has built such a spiritual temple, and adorned it with every Christian virtue; this too he has done under conditions in which a smaller man would have lost all simplicity of character. The praise which he received in his lifetime was in truth not far from worship; yet he never posed, never showed a trace of vanity. Is there a better test of a man's simple greatness of soul than this, that he shall be praised by all the world, and remain modest, humble in spite of it? Francis was great also by his constructive genius, for he brought about a religious revolution, but gave the world something better than he took away. Now all this was a personal work; he was not in any large sense the creature of his environment; indeed he was greatly above his age, and entirely opposed to its spirit. The lusts of feudalism were not con-

fined to the knightly class; the whole social fabric was tainted by them. Is it possible for us to realise what it meant in that day to stand alone against the feudal world? A hundred tyrants no doubt had the wish and the power to take his head, and were restrained only by a vague awe of the unseen. The preacher of penance, charity, and brotherhood, of gentleness and forgiveness, was not a worker on the side of feudalism; and the opposition which he had to face was a more formidable thing than the capricious public opinion of our own day.

In such a time to take the part of the poor and the oppressed, to seek them out and offer them the consolations of religion, was a better work than making war on the Saracens. Think well that Francis had no exterior aids; he could not help the poor with money, for he was poorer than any of them; he was penniless as he went from one place to another, and dependent upon alms for his bread from day to day. But he had need of little; the daily wage of the match-maker would have kept him for a week. He did not, like the modern demagogue, play with the passions of the poor, and live at his ease upon the money he has wheedled out of them; for the saint of Assisi had clear moral perceptions, and knew that robbery if veiled does not alter its nature. How then did Francis influence the poor? By preaching to them the life of the spirit, and by this only. Trade-disputes are things of a day; like fevers and agitators they pass away and are forgotten; but the life of the spirit remains, and is the one thing in the world that has an infinite value.

THE STORY OF THE INSCRIPTIONS.

THERE can be, in literature at least, few greater monuments of human industry and patience than are afforded by the huge volumes containing the Greek and Latin Inscriptions. Since the middle of the sixteenth century successive generations of scholars have girded themselves to the task of accurate copying and careful editing. Each one has improved on the fruits of his predecessor's toil, and the net result is a portly pile of volumes which, it is to be hoped, contain comparatively few inaccuracies. The labour has been long and much of it tedious as well as toilsome. For a great many of the inscriptions are absolutely without interest, and the task of reading them must have been weary work even for the most enthusiastic antiquary. Even Dr. Dryasdust or his esteemed kinsman in the spirit, Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck, might have recoiled from the list of the Archons at Athens or from the *Fasti Consulares*. And then the task is an almost unending one. Fresh inscriptions are continually being discovered, and the proud title of *Corpus* which points to some fair degree of completeness, is always premature. Thus, to take the Greek Inscriptions only, Boeck's great work, published by the Berlin Academy, was begun in 1828 and not finished till 1877 (one is pleased to think that the great scholar saw the end of it), by which time the digging and transcribing of recent years had made the four big folios only a partial record. It was calculated that not half the existing inscriptions were contained in Boeck's *Corpus*, and the Berlin Academy, with true Teutonic patience and stoutness of heart, decided that the whole work was to be done over again. Some volumes have appeared, but he would be a

bold man who would predict with confidence the year in the next century which will see the last one.

How much our knowledge of antiquity has gained by what has been done in this way every scholar is aware. Some of those who are not scholars will perhaps be pleased to learn that one result has been to throw serious discredit on many of the ancient historians. Tacitus, for example, puts a speech of his own composition (a very fine speech too) into the mouth of Claudius, when he could easily have set down what the Emperor actually did say; and Livy is shown over and over again to have been as careless of his facts (though not of his style) as the newest disciple of the New Journalism. But in this paper we do not propose to trouble our readers with any historical or antiquarian disquisitions, but merely, to select from these many volumes, what may fairly be expected to interest people who are neither philologists nor antiquaries.

One of the first impressions one gets from a general view¹ of the *Corpus Inscriptionum* is how much more conspicuous a part religion played in those bygone ages than it does now. A very large number both of public and private inscriptions have to do directly or indirectly with the service of the gods. In the case of one or two temples, lists of their portable property have come down to us in a more or less complete state, and we see how immensely rich they were and what a variety of artistic treasures they contained. We see how carefully the property of the gods was guarded and what precautions were taken against embezzlement on the part of the temple

officials. Sometimes the god appears as a money-lender; the civic authorities were occasionally hard pressed and forced to borrow from the convenient treasures of their temple, and in these cases it is interesting to note the careful arrangements for repayment and the customary exaction of interest.

Other inscriptions make us acquainted with the details of the sacred economy and the elaborate ritual and the various orders of priesthood. One curious analogy between ancient and modern times presents itself in the fact that many of these sacred offices were purchaseable, though it is to be noted that the advowsons of these pagan livings were sold at a much cheaper rate than their modern counterparts.

One very interesting feature of this branch of the subject is the large number of votive offerings. Faith was strong in these Pagans; they cried to the gods in their distress, and when things turned out well they believed that they saw the answer to their prayer. Hence the temples were filled with thank-offerings of all sorts and shapes, from the great statue down to the humble plate or spoon which sufficed to express the poor man's gratitude. On most of these *avathimata*, as they were called, nothing was inscribed but the name of the man who gave and of the god who was to receive the offering; but the more elaborate works of art often bore also the maker's name and in many cases the reason for making the dedication. Mementoes of some famous historic events have even come down to us, telling in their way their own tale. The most interesting of these is the threefold bronze serpent which was part of the votive offering intended to commemorate the mighty victory of Plataea. These poor snakes (for there are, or rather were, three) have suffered dreadfully; their heads are gone, and when Sir Charles Newton discovered them in 1855 they were half buried in the earth of the hippo-

drome at Constantinople. But the inscription is perfectly legible, and will in due course enrich the new edition of the Greek *Corpus*.

A very interesting and very well-preserved specimen of these thank-offerings was found at Apollonia in Phrygia. It records the grateful piety of a man named Sagaris, who, when a great famine was raging in Phrygia, went with all his household into Galatia, where he contrived to keep alive his oxen and also "the good husbandmen, the fair tillers of the soil." For these and other benefits he dedicated an altar with two marble oxen. "Not a great gift," he says, "for who could bring a meet offering to the divine king?"

Of the private inscriptions a great many refer to the victories at the athletic contests. One wonders whether vanity or gratitude to the gods was the motive which prompted the more explicit legend.

One curious inscription has an additional interest because it is with a fair show of probability attributed to the Emperor Hadrian. It signalises an exploit; he had with his own hand killed a bear which he had met accidentally while out riding. The dedication is to the "bowman boy of the clear-voiced Aphrodite," and Hadrian begs the "wise" Eros to "breathe on him the favour of the heavenly Aphrodite." One understands the request, but its connection with the killing of a bear is not so easy to make out.

Sometimes this gratitude took a more elaborate shape than the simple offering of a single gift, however costly. Wealthy donors could build a temple or establish an endowment. An interesting instance of the latter method is to be seen in an inscription which records a certain decree of the senate of Stratonicea in Caria. "Zeus and Hecate," it begun, "have saved our city from many great dangers; we ought to let slip no occasion of showing our piety and our dutious service." After a rather long preamble the decree arranges for the selection of

thirty boys to be chosen from the best families in the city to form a choir. Every day, clothed in white, wreathed with foliage, and with a laurel branch in their hands, they are to repair to the senate-house and there to sing hymns in honour of Zeus and of Hecate, the tutelary deities of the city. Elaborate regulations are laid down for the training of these boys, for securing a proper performance of their duties, and for filling up what vacancies might be caused by death or illness.

In connection with this choir-practice may be mentioned the fact that several of the hymns actually used in the service of the gods are contained in the *Corpus*. The longest of these is a hymn to Isis inscribed on four columns, of which two have come down to us in a good state of preservation. Another was apparently for a special occasion, a severe and lasting epidemic at Athens. It begins with an address to Asclepius, the god of healing, who is, perhaps a little bluntly, requested to wake up: "Shake the slumber from thy eyelids and hear the prayers of thy creatures." Most of these productions, though not without a certain rough fervour, are very poor literature and contrast very unfavourably with the hymns preserved to us in Greek literature. Perhaps in ancient as in modern times a certain degree of badness was as a rule considered a recommendation for poetry which was to be used in public worship.

Among the most interesting of the curiosities of the bygone faith we may place the list of miraculous cures which Asclepius, or his father Apollo, was believed to have effected at Epidaurus. These were engraven on *σῆλαι*, or slabs of stone. Pausanias tells us that there were six of these remaining in his time (the latter half of the second century of our era), but that there had been a greater number. Two of these *σῆλαι* were, less than ten years ago, discovered by Monsieur Kabbadias, whom the Archeological

Society of Athens had commissioned to find what he could by digging. These columns date from about the third century before our era, but there is reason to believe that they are duplicates of a formerly existing record. However that may be, they bear unmistakable witness to the strong faith of early times. We will quote a few specimens, beginning with one which at least has a comic side. An invalid fell asleep and dreamed that the god (Asclepius) opened his chest with a knife and took out a number of leeches. These he placed in the man's hands and then sewed up his chest again. In the morning the man went out of doors with his hand still full of the leeches, and from that moment he was perfectly cured. His illness was owing to the treachery of his mother-in-law, who had been putting leeches into the wine and honey which the unfortunate man drank. Still more remarkable perhaps is the story of Pandarus and Echidorus. The former had on his forehead some objectionable spots, and the god, appearing to him in a vision, put a bandage round these spots and told Pandarus to take off the bandage in the morning and to place it as a gift in the temple. He did so, and found that the spots had been transferred from his forehead to the bandage. This is curious enough, but the story does not end here. For Pandarus some time afterward gave to a friend named Echidorus, who also was troubled by these unpleasant spots and was going to Epidaurus on his own account, some money with which he was to make an offering to the god on Pandarus' behalf. Echidorus however appropriates the money, and when, in nightly vision the god appears to him and makes inquiry, he denies having received it, but promises an inscribed image if he too recovers. The god places on his forehead the bandage which Pandarus had formerly worn and enjoins him to remove it in the morning, to wash in the spring, and to look at his own image in the water. He does so and finds, first that the spots

have disappeared from the bandage, and next that they have been transferred to his own face.

The questions asked of oracles and the answers given form a closely allied division of the subject. Boeck's *Corpus* contains only a few specimens, but some of the most interesting have been discovered since the publication of that monumental work. Among these one may note particularly those dug up at Dodona by M. Carapanos. Dodona was the oldest and one of the most famous of all the oracular seats, and M. Carapanos was fortunate enough to bring to light a few very interesting inquiries. They were all written on thin sheets of lead, and in many cases the inscription has become in whole or in part illegible, but there are a few which are almost or quite perfect. In many cases the inquirers are anxious to know what they are to do to please the gods, or which gods they are to try to please particularly. A woman asks to which god she is to sacrifice in order that she may recover from some unnamed illness; Eubandros and his wife want to know "to what gods, heroes, or divinities they are to pray and sacrifice in order that they and their household may do well now and for all time." Then there are parents who want to know what they can do for the health of their child; another pair who ask if they are going to have other children than the one they are already favoured with; while in one or two instances putative fathers inquired whether the honour of paternity is not being improperly thrust upon them. Perhaps the most curious of all those which M. Carapanos has given us is an inquiry from a man called Agis. He is anxious to find out whether some missing pillows and bed-clothes were stolen, or whether he had lost them himself. The answers to these interesting inquiries have not come down to us, but we have a few specimens of oracular responses; one, in a woefully imperfect state, dating from the third century B.C., while an-

other, fairly well preserved, may probably be referred to the times of Antoninus. The occasion of it was a pestilence at Pergamos, "the metropolis of Asia," and the injunctions of the god were by the command of the town-council engraved on marble slabs and set up in the market-place. One notices that a good deal of sacrifice is enjoined, and it is probable that the priests at Pergamos at least were very well satisfied with the oracle's reply.

More curious than these are the general answers framed to suit all comers. Two inscriptions have been found, one in Lydia and another in Pisidia, each consisting of twenty-four single lines of iambic verse. The first of these verses or lines begins with alpha, the next with beta, and so on through the alphabet down to omega. They are considered (for the matter is not quite certain) to be oracular replies, and it is conjectured with much plausibility that the first drew a letter from an urn and then had the corresponding line handed to him by the officiating priest. One notices that good fortune is generally promised. For instance the first, or alpha line is, "You will accomplish all things prosperously," a very gratifying response indeed. But we note, too, a tendency to moral reflections and an unsatisfactory vagueness; and it is very likely that those who drew xi and were told that "It is not possible to get fruit from withered boughs," or who under eta were informed that "The shining sun, which sees everything, sees you," may have felt a little disappointed.

A somewhat more elaborate system of responses is shown in a series of inscriptions found near Attalia in Pamphylia, a town which some readers may remember best through its having been visited by St. Paul. In this case a large number of answers were always ready, and the particular one to be selected for any given individual was decided by the throw of dice. These were not the ordinary cubes of ivory, but knuckle-bones

marked on four sides only, the rounded ends where the numbers five and two would have been placed being left vacant. Five of these knuckle-bones were used, and in consequence there were twenty-four different scores, the lowest being five (five aces), and the highest thirty (five sixes). Owing to the absence of the numbers two and five there was no possible score either of six or twenty-nine. But it will be obvious that the same score could be arrived at in different ways; twenty-two could be made up of three sixes, three, and an ace, or of four fours and a six, or again of one four, two threes, and two sixes. The reader who works out the whole problem will find that there are fifty-four possible combinations, and it seems that for each one of these was an answer of the oracle ready marked not only with the sum total of the throw, but also with the different numbers of which that total was made up. Thus the inquirer would have only to throw the dice and the appropriate response would be handed to him. Only ten of these answers have come down to us, and the last of them is in a very fragmentary condition. Some are very gloomy predictions; the oracle was evidently not like the phrenologists of to-day who prophesy smooth things to everybody. Let us take for example an answer which corresponds to the score of twenty-two made up of four fours and one six. It seems to have been specially intended for authors, for it runs thus: "To cast seed on the sea and to write writings are both a vain and useless toil. Being mortal, force not the divinity lest he hurt thee." One or two however are more cheerful; twenty-five, for example, made up of four sixes and an ace, is almost ferocious in its promise of success: "As wolves seize lambs and mighty lions slow-paced oxen, even so shalt thou have mastery of all these (things or persons), and thou shalt have all thou askest for and thou" a word or two is missing at the end.

Somewhat similar to these were the

Roman *sortes*. Our best examples of these are to be found in Nos. 1438, 1454 of the Latin *Corpus Inscriptionum*. These are short sentences, each forming a rough hexameter verse. They were inscribed on small rectangular discs of metal, which however have been lost since their first discovery. As they were perforated in the right-hand corner, it is probable they were fastened together with a string, though it is not known exactly how they were used. These certainly show a marked tendency to be very oracular in language, and at times to fall back on platitudes. "Many men are deceitful, don't believe them," hardly seems a very satisfactory answer to one who perhaps had inquired if his wife, or mother-in-law, would recover from sickness; and the statement that "The horse is beautiful, but you can't ride him," besides being somewhat uncomplimentary is certainly not so clear as might be wished. Then several of them (we have only seventeen specimens in all) coolly inform the inquirer that he ought to have come earlier: "Do you ask me now, consult me now? The time is gone." Probably dissatisfaction was at times openly expressed; the man felt he was paying his fee (one may be sure there was a fee) for nothing, for we find the response: "We are not deceitful as you said; you consult us foolishly." However it is reassuring to know that there was one entirely satisfactory answer: "Gladly, willingly seek, it will be granted; you will always rejoice."

But let us come to another class of inscription, to what we may call the minatory or maledictory order. A great deal of vehement cursing was expended in guarding or attempting to guard the sanctity of the tomb. Many epitaphs contain the most vigorous imprecation on those who disturb the remains in their last resting-place, or who should offend against the order and decency of the sepulchre. This style of cursing, it may be observed, continued in full

vigour in Christian times, often harmonising ill with our modern notions of Christianity. Some are almost horrible in their ferocity, as when the violator of the tomb is told that "He will be accursed of God for ever," or that "He will give account to God, Who will judge the quick and the dead." There is one which perhaps will rather provoke a smile. The offender is threatened with the curse of all the Fathers of the Nicene Council; "He that throws rubbish in this enclosure," the inscription runs, "has the anathema from the three hundred and eighteen Fathers, as an enemy of God." Sidney Smith once alluded to a forty-parson power (of preaching if we remember aright); but the anathematising ability of three hundred and eighteen Nicene Fathers is a much more appalling idea, and there is a ludicrous contrast between this terrible but vague penalty and the very prosaic and familiar offence.

But besides this prospective cursing there was another kind of malediction invoked not on those who might hereafter do something objectionable, but on those who had actually offended, the names of the guilty persons being very often given. These imprecations on particular persons the Romans called *devotiones*, and as, with the Greeks, they were included among votive offerings, they have given to the word *anathema* its present unfavourable significance. These were written on thin sheets of lead, and several of them have come down to us in a more or less perfect condition. The most important of them were discovered by Sir Charles Newton at Cnidus,¹ which are dated from about the third or fourth century of our era. They were found within the limits of the temple of Demeter, and as each plaque of lead has holes in the four corners, it is probable they were affixed to the walls of the temple. They are very interesting, even if it be rather mournful (except for the

¹ In Sir Charles Newton's opinion they may possibly be later than B.C. 100.

professed cynic) to read this pitiful record of petty hatred and vindictiveness; it is certainly curious to notice the commonplace offences which called down such fiery imprecations. For the cursing is very hearty, the offending person was devoted to the Infernal Powers,—“to Demeter and Persephone, Pluto and all the gods and goddesses with Demeter,” so that punishments might not come upon him only in this life, but also in the world to come. The reasons given are very various, and sometimes hardly appear adequate. We can understand the wife who, being abandoned with her children, calls down the divine vengeance not only on her husband's paramour but also on the persons who received him in hospitality, and we notice with some interest that no malediction whatever is invoked on the faithless spouse himself; another woman denounces those who had accused her of poisoning her husband; a man curses those who bound and scourged him, and those who instigated the outrage. In these cases one can understand the thirst for vengeance, but in others one wonders how anybody can have taken so much trouble for so small an offence. A lady imprecates those who had cheated her by using false weights; another has lost a drinking-cup. The offended persons were generally ladies and it was some missing article of attire which most commonly moved their wrath. One long inscription only partly decipherable begins thus: “Artemis devotes to Demeter, Persephone and all the gods with Demeter, him (or her) who, when I asked for the garments I had left, did not return them.” The force of this lady's feelings leads her to an almost indelicate enumeration of the objects in question, and a good deal of the rest of the inscription is illegible. Sometimes the authors of the imprecation put in the proviso that the guilty persons are to be exempt if they return the missing article, and in most cases they pray that they may not involve themselves

in the penalty of the curse. "May it be lawful for us," one of them concludes, "to go to the bath with the accursed person, to enter the same roof, to sit at the same table," which looks as if the vengeful lady still meant to keep up an appearance of friendship.

But there was another way of imprecating curses on your enemy's head. In this case the leaden tablets inscribed with the malevolent wishes were placed in the inside of tombs. They were not affixed to the walls of the sepulchre but were folded over, or sometimes rolled up. One of the specimens was found not only rolled up but fastened round with iron wire. In some of these the name of the person denounced is written upside down and reversed, evidently as an evil charm, sometimes inscribed three times over. Two interesting examples come from the neighbourhood of Athens and may be roughly dated about B.C. 100. Here is a Latin specimen, probably a century later: "As the dead man who is buried here can neither speak nor converse, so may Rhodine, who lives at M. Licinius Faustus's, be dead and neither able to speak nor converse. Just as the dead man is neither pleasing to gods nor men, so may Rhodine, who lives at M. Licinius's, be pleasing, and be just as much worth as the dead who is buried here. Father Pluto, I commend Rhodine to you that she may be hateful to M. Licinius Crassus." The writing on these anathematising tablets is bad and the grammar worse. Probably only slaves, and chiefly female slaves, found a passing gratification in the thought of securing vengeance in this way. In one inscription where curses are denounced on "Danae, the maid-servant recently bought by Capito," the writer of the tablet indicates her belief that a previous *devotio* had not missed its mark. Probably in this case, and in that of "Rhodine who is at M. Licinius's" jealousy was the moving motive. It is the fury of a displaced

favourite that we get a glimpse of across all the intervening centuries.

Now that we are on Italian ground and dealing with curses, we may find space to refer to the inscribed bullets which have been picked up chiefly in two or three particular places and have added their brief legend to the miscellaneous harvest of the *Corpus Inscriptionum*. Leaden bullets sharpened a little at each end and so called "acorns" were much used in ancient warfare, especially in sieges; hurled by skilled slingers they could prove very deadly weapons. As a rule nothing was marked on these bullets; the principal exceptions are interesting as throwing a ray or two of very lurid light upon some gloomy scenes of history. For these inscribed bullets found their deadly employment in no ordinary war, but in those savage struggles which marked the closing century of the Roman Republic. Some found near Henna and Leontinum commemorate the ferocity of the Servile War. Many have been in comparatively recent times picked up near Ascoli (the ancient Asculum), and these remind us of the final stage in the last grand hopeless struggle which the Italian towns waged against the over-mastering tyranny of Rome. In this case we have inscribed bullets of both sides. "*Feri Pomp.* (Pompeium), Strike Pompeius," expresses the wishes of the besieged, Cn. Pompeius Strabo being the general in charge of the siege; while the Roman assurance of coming victory was expressed by "*Fugitivi peristis*, You runaway slaves are ruined." Again, fifty years later, when Mark Antony and Octavius were contending for the mastery of the Roman world, the siege of Perusia, where the "sharp-tongued" Fulvia and the Triumvirs's brother Lucius were holding out against the forces of the future Augustus, gave occasion to the use of these inscribed bullets. "Hit Octavius," "Hit Antonius," we read; the most undignified portion of the human anatomy being in each case indicated for the blow. Then Lucius

is reproached with his scanty hair: "You are ruined, bald-headed Antony, the victory is Caesar's," we read on one bullet. A higher degree of tragic interest attaches to another inscription. Perugia was reduced by the slow process of famine, which reached such a pitch of intensity that "*Perusina fumes*, Perusian hunger," became a proverbial expression. We read with horror that the brutal Antonius denied all rations to the large number of slaves shut up in the beleaguered city, and at the same time refused to permit them to leave, lest the besiegers should know the true state of things inside. But a bullet that has been found shows us that this callous brutality missed its mark, for we read, "*Esureis et me celas*, You are hungry and you are hiding it from me."

Passing from maledictory inscriptions, let us take a brief glance at a few such small things as cups and plates and gems. On these nothing much could be written, and in fact they were more often than not left without any inscription at all. Sometimes, however, when the cup or drinking vase was something of a work of art, it bore the name of the maker. Some were probably sent as presents, and bear a name which we may suppose to be either that of the giver or receiver. Some bear the inscription, so-and-so "is beautiful;" some in general, "The boy, or the girl is beautiful." These are perhaps analogous to the mugs one sees in the Lowther Arcade marked "For a good boy," or are possibly the presents of lovers.

The inscriptions on cups are generally of a bacchanalian order, "Drink me," "Good luck and drink me," "Drink well," and so on. One bears the inscription "I am thirsty," which is evidently meant to be the language of the cup asking to be refilled; another has the motto "Mix," and I suppose belonged to some more frugal or more temperate individual. We have one specimen, however, which bears an inscription which might harrow up the

feelings of a teetotaler. It is this: "Mogea gives the cup as a gift to Eucharis, the wife of Eutrepantus, that she may learn to drink it all off without stopping." The cup in question holds about as much as the modern tumbler. On a certain plate of great value, being made of jasper and set about with gems, is this quaint inscription, "Ambrosia to one, poison to all others."

The engraved gems are occasionally dedicated to some god or carved with a prayer, as "Oh great Zeus, save Seleucia;" but more often they talk the language of lovers, and there is something a little pathetic in the pretty speeches which have survived while all other memory of the enamoured fair has perished. "The flower of nature" we read on one; "Theano is my light," on another. Some bear a longer legend, as (an inscription often repeated), "They say what they like. Let them say. I care not. Love me. 'Tis well for you." This may perhaps be a dialogue between the two lovers. In one instance we easily discern two speakers, though the exact drift is not so easy to catch. "If you love me, follow. No. I love you. Don't make a mistake. I see it and I laugh." The reader's imagination may be exercised over this. If the *ov* of the inscription is joined with the *φλῶ*, then we might interpret: "If you love me, follow." "I don't love you, don't make a mistake" (i.e. "don't think I do"). "I see it, &c." (i.e. "I know you don't, and I don't care a straw"). Another, an emerald, gives us a glimpse at "the pangs of love despised." The carving represents Cupid bound to a pillar on which a vulture stands, and for legend there is only the one word, "Justly." In explanation Boeck very aptly quotes from the Anthology a little poem in which some unsuccessful lover consoles himself by imagining a similar punishment for the mischievous god. The last couplet of this little lyric goes something like this: "Eros, the pains of mortals

were your laughter; you suffer for your crimes; the punishment is just."

A very curious class of inscriptions may still be seen on the statue of Memnon at Thebes. This mutilated colossus excited a great deal of interest in the days of the early Roman Empire, from the time of Nero to that of Septimius Severus. It was then that the story of the music at sunrise was in most vigorous circulation; people came to hear and be convinced, and then in the most ungrateful way they carved their versified record of the fact on the statue itself, carefully introducing their own names and stating the precise day and hour of the performance. Among the most distinguished visitors was the Emperor Hadrian. He came several times and brought his wife Sabina with him. In her suite there was a lady called Julia Balbilla, who had a turn for poetry and has left two of her effusions upon Memnon's left foot and one on his right thigh. On one occasion the colossus, it seems, was obstinately dumb; Sabina was much disappointed, and her friend Balbilla indignantly warns the statue not to make the emperor angry, "for keeping his revered wife waiting so long." However, on another occasion Memnon was especially obliging, recognised Hadrian "the universal monarch," and gave three separate exhibitions of his powers. Everybody was pleased, and Julia Balbilla produced some of her very best verses, and there they are on the left leg of the great statue.

The wealthy Romans seem to have made up family parties to visit the wonderful sight; one man records that he came with his wife, another with his wife and children. Both of these produce Greek verse, though the names of the visitors are Roman. The first one is reminded of the wonders he was taught to believe in when a boy; "Of the talking Argos and the talking beech-tree of Pelagic Zeus, but now I see,—see with my own eyes—that you speak, and what

sort of sound you utter," which is a curious way of putting it. We get a kindly touch of nature in the inscription of Cecilia Trebulla, who, when she heard the sacred voice of Memnon, longed for her mother and prayed that she might hear it too. Trebulla came afterwards with some friends (we don't know whether the mother was of the party) and records that Memnon greeted them on this second visit as old acquaintances. Trebulla was a lady of some pretences to culture and liberal views, for though she alluded to Memnon as the son of Eos and Tithonus, she concluded with the inquiry: "Did Nature, the artificer of the universe, give to a stone perception and a voice?" In a third effusion, carved like the other two on Memnon's left leg, she suggests that the noise is due to grief, grief at the thought of the injuries which "that great Persian conqueror, Cambyses," had done to the statue. There were evidently sceptics as well as believers, for while one, in language borrowed from Homer, declares that there is "some god within," another is content to admire "the cleverness of the thing." One inscription gives us a glimpse of the unintelligent tourist of those days; a certain Beras writes up in one of the underground passages at Thebes that he was astonished at all the catacombs, especially Memnon's. But enough of this statue and its morning music.

Another curiosity, but of a different sort, also comes from Egypt. It is a schoolboy's dictation, or perhaps an attempt at original composition: "The vine drinking water from its master gives him back unmixed wine, a twofold return." Then there is appended the moral, which, however, hardly seems to fit; it is, "Work hard," and one wonders whether the young gentleman who wrote that exercise so many years ago was not asked to find a moral for himself and so took the one he heard most frequently.

Among the Latin inscriptions the

advertisements of tradesmen form an interesting class. Here is one found near Rome: "If you want inscriptions made, or have any need of marble-work, you'll get it here." Another enterprising man at Bologna announces, "A bath in town style and every convenience." A similar notice meets us only eight miles from Rome, where of course most of the customers would be able to know whether they really had "town style" or not. A curious example comes from Lyons which may be paraphrased thus: "Here Mercury promises profit, Apollo safety, and Septimanus bed and breakfast. He who has been here before will be treated all the better a second time. Stranger, settle on your lodging beforehand." A more independent tone is taken by another inn-keeper, who doesn't hesitate to declare that his house is not intended for people of only moderate means. "If you live in good style, here's the house for you; if in poor fashion, I'll put up with you, but I shall be ashamed of having you." There are a good many modern hotels conducted on this principle, but the proprietors are not as a rule quite so frank in expressing their sentiments.

A number of these business announcements are to be found at Pompeii, that brisk little city to whose daily life the energy of Vesuvius has lent a kind of immortality. Here we get a large number of miscellaneous inscriptions dealing with matters of daily life, announcements of forthcoming gladiatorial games, edicts of magistrates, wine-sellers' attempts to captivate customers, rewards for lost or stolen property, houses for sale or to be let, and other things of that sort. We learn from one announcement that a glass of wine could be got for one *as* (about three farthings), while for four *asses* one could drink real Falernian. Another inscription informs us that a *denarius* (about 7½*d.*) was paid for washing a tunic, and the date, the thirteenth of April, is carefully re-

corded by the writer. Whether she was the laundress or the owner of the tunic must be left undecided, but it seems at least that she was in the habit of marking up her washing-account on the walls of her house. There are several such inscriptions on the same wall of this particular house, all dated; the twentieth of April a tunic and a pallium, on the seventh of May an article which need not be particularised, while on the day following two tunics are scored.

Again, there are such announcements as, "This is not the place for idle people; loafer, be off!" or the well-known "*Cave canem*, beware of the dog." In this connection may be mentioned two inscriptions, though they don't belong to Pompeii. Both are on dogs' collars, and the wearer of the first seems to have been a ferocious animal, at any rate in the eyes of his owner, for his collar bears this legend: "Don't hold me, it will not be good for you." The other collar was probably worn by a pet dog, for it is of silver and the inscription shows that the owner was afraid of losing him: "I have run away. Hold me. When you've brought me back to my master Zosimus you'll get a *solidum*" (a coin about equal in value to an English sovereign).

To return to Pompeii, there are many specimens of the *καρκῖνοι*, the "crab-verses" as they were called, lines which can be read either backwards or forwards with the same result. We can only recollect one in English, the well-known sentence referring to Napoleon, "Able was I ere I saw Elba"; but there are more than a dozen preserved in the Anthology of Planudes, and it is one of these, a little altered, that some one thought fit to paint up on the wall of his house at Pompeii. What little meaning it has refers to the exploits of Diomedes in the Iliad: "Ἦδη μοι Διὸς ἄρ' ἀπάντα παρὰ σοι, Διομήδη." Even those who are altogether innocent of Greek will see that this can run both ways equally well.

These scribblings form an important class of the *Parietarie Pompeianæ*. Many of them are very sorry specimens indeed, and quotation even in the semi-obscurity of the Latin tongue is quite impossible. Yet there is something striking in the reflection that Time, which has taken away so much, which has robbed us of the comedies of Menander and the lyrics of Sappho, has let these poor trivial obscurities live; it is mournful to think that the idle scribblings of shameless lads and wanton women have outlasted some of the mightiest monuments of human genius. One can't help wondering, too, what these scribblers would have felt if they had been told that their scurrilities were destined to leap to light centuries after all other memory of themselves had vanished, and to be carefully collected and copied by learned men, and to stand in one big volume as a permanent record against them. Seriously, one might say that some of the ample pages of the fourth volume of the *Berlin Corpus*, with their pitiless register of idle words, look like a leaf from the black book of the Recording Angel. It must be remembered, however, in justice to antiquity, that these performances were the work of "certain lewd fellows of the baser sort" only; decent people were very properly disgusted. One distich scrawled up in three different parts of the town expresses contemporary sentiment: "I wonder, O wall, that you haven't fallen in pieces since you endure the stupidities of so many writers."

Yet there are some small scribblings which are curious without being offensive. One is from a man called Zosimus who found a difficulty in writing, for he made two unsuccessful attempts to get the word "Victoria" set down, the name of the person he was addressing. Then he asks for help: "If you think that I haven't a cent," he says; the rest of his scribble has faded into illegibility, and we can't tell why Zosimus took this particular way of attracting Victoria's

attention. Equally curious is the inscription of one Pyrrhus, who sends greeting to his colleague Chius, and then continues: "I am sorry to have heard that you are dead. And so, farewell." Whether this was seriously meant as a sort of epitaph on the defunct Chius, or whether Chius was still alive and this was meant for a mild pleasantry (like his who at Rome wrote up in Greek that he had written nothing) we will not attempt to decide.

Two literary curiosities may close this paper. One is a curious mnemonic intended to show how many days there were in each month. It consists of twelve lines of verse, each of which contains exactly the same number of letters as the corresponding month had days. It must have cost the composer a world of trouble, for it is also an acrostic, the initial of each line giving, "*Μένιππος εἶπε*, Menippus invented (this)." The verses are fairly good at the beginning, but one is very surprised to find them falling off very much toward the close; and one fancies that Menippus himself was glad enough to get the task completed. His friends would be certain to tell him that his labour was all in vain, and that it would be quite as much trouble to remember his verses as to recollect the days of the month.

An equally futile expenditure of energy is shown in a double acrostic which comes to us from the island of Philæ in the Nile. It records the sentiments of a Roman traveller who visited Egypt a little before the Christian era. He had had enough, he says to the cataracts, of rocks and mountains; he meant to say a long good-bye to Philæ and to go home and write his book of travels. This epigram is a double acrostic; but the author was not content to surmount the difficulties which this kind of composition necessitates, and made the matter harder still by introducing a fresh refinement. For the second letters of each verse and the last are in every case (except with the last

verse, for the final of which there was no letter left) the same, so that the acrostic could be read in two ways. It is hardly necessary to add that these initials and finals (or second letters) give us the name of the author of the epigram, Catilius the son of Nicanor, possibly the Nicanor whose father was the old tutor of the Emperor Augustus. At any rate Catilius put up in the temple at Philæ a marble slab on which Augustus is lauded in very extravagant style. In a third inscription, now only partly legible, he sings the praises of piety. This is all we hear of him; if he got back home again and wrote his book of travels describing all the wonders of Egypt, it has perished without leaving any trace of its existence.

But with Catilius' ingenious rhymings our selections from the *Corpus* must close. Many more specimens of equal curiosity and interest might be given, but the capacity of magazines and the patience of readers have their limits. Enough has been selected to enable the English reader to judge of the abundant material which has come down to us in stone and bronze, in brass and ivory, and enough, we will hope, to show what value there is for us in it. The big volumes might easily be classed in Lamb's list of books that are no books, and even the handier compilations of Kaibel or Wilmanns have no very entertaining look. Yet in reality the hours one

may spend in turning over the greater or the smaller pages have a peculiar interest. In these disjointed scraps something of the past seems to live again, of the old far-off Pagan past so different from the present we know. Pictures of the days of long ago "flash upon the inward eye" as we turn from stone to bronze, from marble slab to leaden tablet. We see the priest at the altar, the athlete at the games, the soldier on the march, the noisy ecclesia and the grave senate. One comes too to recognise more fully how elaborate and complex was the old civilisation, how wonderful and in how many ways admirable, and how "advanced." And we can hardly help thinking of the loss that humanity sustained when it was bereft of "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome," and musing on the many centuries it took to build up a new order of things out of the ruins of the old. For if we are now "wiser than all the ancients," if there is more culture, knowledge, better security for life and property, more of the comforts and conveniences of life to-day than there were in the time of the early Cæsars, it is well perhaps to remember that the advantage has not been with us moderns for so very long. Could we maintain, for example, that the world was as a whole better off at the beginning of the seventeenth century after Christ than it was at the close of the first?

AN OXFORD IDYLL.

I.

"I wish they hadn't asked me!" said Christopher Craik, the Logic Tutor of St. Mary's, as he looked down at the party in the old secluded college garden. "I wonder," he added, glancing at the reflection of his red tie in the glass, his new tie and black coat, his young and scholarly face, "I wonder,—but no, it isn't too red; they wear them red," he continued, with attempted cheerfulness. "No——" but hearing the laughter of ladies below his window, he scuttled back hastily. His rooms were high up in the garden tower, almost up among the topmost boughs of the high college elms, and when, after a moment, he returned to his window and peered down, he could see through the green of the trees patches of white and pink colour, the dresses of many ladies, dappling the lawn, and moving and meeting on the college paths. Among the summer leaves the summer wind was breathing; it blew in at the window now and then, laden with scents from the garden, and the faint stir and hum of human voices; and Christopher Craik, or the Corn-Craik, as the undergraduates called him, felt his heart beating high with an unwonted emotion of youth and excitement.

The early philosophers of Asia Minor were very remarkable and suggestive men, but now that he had finished and published his book about them, he meant to enjoy himself a little. And what shallow wisdom it was moreover to live in the almost solitary way he had been living all the winter. All the winter! All his life really; spending his youth among books and almost shut out from everything that is light and amiable in experience. Why, the greenest of

his undergraduate pupils might easily know more of modern life than he did! "Oh, don't harp so on modern life!" his friend Ranken, the junior Dean of St. John's, often said to him in his acrid way. "Do for pity's sake leave it alone, and stick to your Asia Minor." But then Ranken was absurdly cynical. Craik remembered how often, on their way home in the winter evenings from their regular Sunday walks, his friend would pause opposite an uncurtained window and make bitter merriment over the domestic picture they saw in the golden light within, a family at tea very likely, or an academic parent romping with his children.

As he looked down now, it was agreeable to him to see so many ladies in the old garden, and he could not believe that Ranken had very authentic grounds for his narrow prejudice. For Ranken would have liked to shut ladies out of Oxford altogether, would have liked to keep it as it used to be, a tranquil home of learning and celibacy, before the Royal Commission had granted the Fellows the liberty of marrying. For that unblest liberty, he maintained, by filling the University with frivolity and ladies, had so destroyed the old character of the place that now, as was notorious, the whole of the summer term, with a good part of the rest of the academic year, was given over to dances and picnics and parties and other silly and deteriorating trifles. Craik had not been able to contradict his friend, for hitherto the sounds and echoes of the social dissipation had hardly reached him in his retired corner, save as he had heard them reverberating through the gloomy caverns of Ranken's imagination. But he could not quite believe,—here Craik began to laugh,

for his eye at that moment was caught by the gargoyle just above him, which was also leaning over and looking into the garden. For four hundred years that weather-beaten creature had sat there making faces, but now its visage seemed more than ever twisted with a look of Gothic cynicism. As Craik lingered, looking out, himself almost like a second gargoyle, he thought he could see in the garden below two ladies of his acquaintance, Mrs. Cotton and Mrs. Trotter. How ridiculous Ranken was in his views, almost grotesque as the gargoyle! Craik took his hat and stick, and started down stairs for the garden. He would see for himself.

II.

It was very worldly and brilliant in the garden. Besides a crowd of ladies and young men, three Professors and two Heads of Houses had already arrived, and others were expected. Mr. White, Mr. Long, and Mr. Maple Feters, the young unmarried Fellows who were giving the party, kept glancing toward the gateway over the shoulders of their arriving guests, all smiles however as they greeted their friends with apposite remarks. On tables under the trees white cloths were spread, looking almost blue in the vivid green, and on them were plates of red strawberries, ancient silver bowls of sugar, rows of shining spoons, cakes, and dewy jugs of amber-coloured lemonade. Sounds of discreet gaiety, voices and laughter and the tinkling of glasses, quickened the sleepy silence of the garden, while from beneath a high and fleecy cloud the rays of the westering sun brightened the tree-tops and walls, lingering on the ladies' dresses and streaking with blue shadows the green old lawn. It put Craik in mind of old French coloured prints he had seen, or the courtly fêtes he had read of; he thought too of the garden party in *Love's Cottage*, a pretty novel he had looked at lately, the party

where Miss Molyneux first meets Pastorel the poet.

He kept smiling as he moved about, but he really felt rather shy and alien; if he only knew more people, and could be seen laughing and talking and moving his hands, like the other young men! But soon he met his friend Mrs. Cotton, the wife of Professor Cotton, and he begged to be allowed to get her an ice or some other refreshment. He noticed a brilliant purple feather conspicuously waving from the top of Mrs. Cotton's bonnet, and was glad that his tie was so bright. How pleasant it was, on a summer day, how pleasant and harmless to play brilliantly at life! And did not Aristotle himself place magnificence high among the virtues?

But the Junior Fellows still had their anxious eyes fixed on the garden entrance. "Miss Lamb, has Miss Lamb come?" Craik heard voices murmuring about him. "No, not yet, but she's coming. Just heard Maple Feters telling some one"—"Long says he can't understand it. In her note she said—" "So quiet, so different"—"They say in London—" "Oh yes, and here everybody, Professors, Heads of Houses; it's too amusing—" "Well, she says she wants to study all the types." "Ah look, there she comes!"—Craik turned with the others, and saw Miss Lamb coming in through the Gothic archway. Her face was shaded with a large white hat, and her white dress, falling in long plain lines to her feet, swayed a little as she walked slowly over the grass out of the shadow of the building.

Long and Maple Feters started forward, and escorted Miss Lamb and her aunt across the lawn. They drew near to Craik and Mrs. Cotton. "Oh, there is Mrs. Cotton," Miss Lamb exclaimed, and turned towards them. "Dear Mrs. Cotton," she said, "I was so hoping I should see you here!" Craik looked at Miss Lamb. She rested her eyes on him for a second, then pressing Mrs. Cotton's hand, she stooped down

with a graceful impulse, and kissed the fat old thing. Craik overheard Mrs. Lyon, the wife of the President of All Saints, talking to the Warden of St. Simon's. "Dear Miss Lamb!" she said, in a deep and sentimental voice, "she is just as nice to women as she is to men." "She is much nicer, surely," the ancient Warden replied with a cackling laugh. "She never kisses us!"

Again Craik walked about alone, smiling and conspicuous, and although he tried to think that he was enjoying himself, he really wished very much to be back in his tower again, up there in its pleasant green shade and solitude. That after all was his place, the only place he was fit for, and he had better stick to it, and stick to his books, and not cast again the gloom of his presence on the social enjoyment of other more fortunate people. Thus resignedly musing, he retreated into the near shade of a laburnum tree, and, ceasing to smile in his fixed and weary way, he watched through the flowering branches the shining colours and placid agitation of the garden party. All the men, except himself, were moving among the groups of ladies, weaving darker threads into the brilliant pattern. Young Cobbe he saw, the captain of the college boat-club, walking with Miss Lamb, walking and talking pleasantly; and he sighed, for although he was Cobbe's tutor and well versed in his stupidity, he could not help envying the easy manners of the undergraduate.

But the picture ceased to be a mere picture to him, and the placid current of his thoughts grew quite agitated, when he noticed that Miss Lamb and her companion were coming directly to his tree. Could he manage to slip away without being seen? She was coming probably to pick a spray of the yellow flower, to put in her white dress, or carry away perhaps as a memory of the party. And if he were found standing there, like a policeman, it would be so awkward!

Miss Lamb fortunately met Maple Feters, and stopping herself, seemed to be sending him on to the tree alone. When he reached it he pushed aside the branches and said with a smile, "Come along, Craik, I want to introduce you to Miss Lamb." "Me!" "Yes, you. We saw you here; she wants to meet you." "Wants to meet *me*?" "Yes, *you*. Come along." Craik came out from beneath the tree. "Miss Lamb,—does she live in Oxford?" "You don't mean to tell me you've never heard of Miss Lamb!" Feters paused in astonishment. "You must be the only man in Oxford then who has not. Miss Lamb is an American." "An American?" Craik had heard that American ladies were so brilliant.

"Miss Lamb, let me introduce Mr. Craik, our philosopher."

"Mr. Craik, I am glad to meet you."

Craik bowed; then he saw that Miss Lamb had put out her hand; he tried to take it, but it was too late. The American young lady however smiled, and put out her hand again, and gave it to him frankly, almost as if it were a present. "We ought to shake hands, oughtn't we? It's the English way, isn't it?" Craik stifled a guffaw, and his awkward sensations began to go.

"Mr. Cobbe, would you mind getting me an ice?" Cobbe's face wore an odd expression as he bowed and disappeared. Maple Feters fluttered off, like a fat butterfly, to other occupations. Craik and Miss Lamb were left alone and they began to walk with vague steps, and, on the lady's part, vague, unfinished scraps of conversation, along the garden path. Then stopping, and resting her hands on her parasol and looking at her companion, as she leaned a little towards him, she said, as if they were old friends already: "I wonder—would you take me into your old college cloisters! I have heard so much about them, and it wouldn't be wrong for us to run away from the

party for just a few minutes. I do so want to—you won't mind?" "Oh dear, no!" Craik exclaimed. "Certainly we can go. It's through the quadrangle. But Mr. Cobbe,—will he find you?" "Oh, he'll know where I am; and if he don't, it's no matter. Come!" They went under the garden tower, and through the little old quadrangle, into the entrance of the cloisters. Of the history and traditions of the place, and of the whole college, Craik spoke almost with eloquence, while Miss Lamb listened with murmurs and interruptions of enthusiastic interest. The cloisters, as he explained, were once the cloisters of a monastery; the tower was the monastery tower; and the bell that hung there, and twice a day rang the college into chapel, was the bell that once sounded for the matins and vespers of the monks.

"What! monks? Did monks really once live here? Oh, how I should have liked to have seen it then!" "Ah, but you couldn't, you know. They never allowed ladies inside the gates." "How silly!" "Yes," Craik said smiling, "wasn't it silly?"

They walked with slow steps around the shadowed cloisters, and Miss Lamb talked idly of the party. It was such a pretty party, so amusing. Did he often go to garden-parties? No! How odd! She did—to ever so many. Then suddenly she cried, in a changed voice, "But how frivolous I am, Mr. Craik! I can see that you are quite shocked." "Shocked! oh no, not a bit." "Well, then, you ought to be. Imagine being so frivolous in a solemn place like this. Tell me, you study philosophy, don't you? It must be splendid; I do envy you so! When I am in a place like Oxford I feel so frivolous, somehow, and ignorant. Why I feel afraid—" Then, after a moment's charming hesitation, "Yes, quite afraid to talk to clever people. You mustn't mind what I say, will you?" "But I'm not clever!" he exclaimed. "Why—" "Oh, but Mr. Craik! Why you've written a

book!" "But that's nothing. And it's only a sort of study, nothing really." "I wish I could read it." "Oh no! don't try; it's a stupid thing, only meant for students."

Miss Lamb paused, and turning her eyes to Craik with a look filled with reproach, she said, "Ah, you are like the others, you don't think I am serious; you think I would not understand it!" "Oh no; not that!" Craik urged, in quick distress. "You would understand it of course, what there is to understand. I only meant," he stammered, "I only meant that it was not well written, not on interesting,—not really worth reading, I mean." "Oh, I'm sure it is worth reading, and I hear it's so clever. It is about Asia Minor, isn't it? I wish you would tell me something about it, and about your work. Do you like it here? Of course you do. Have you been in Oxford long?"

For a third time they passed around the cloister square, moving with slow footsteps that scarcely waked the old echoes of the stones and arches, and Craik, talking with an unreserve that was intimate and sudden, and yet somehow seemed quite natural to him, told about his work and the writing of his book. Then, in answer to a question of Miss Lamb's, he described his quiet bringing-up, in an obsolete old town where his parents were tradespeople; his early schooling, how he had come to Oxford on a scholarship, and how he had stayed there ever since, living in the same college, his parents having died, and the Logic Tutorship being offered to him just when he had taken his degree. So he seemed to have lived a long while there, in that sleepy old college, with its high walls and buildings: as an undergraduate first, busy and almost solitary save for a few friends similar to himself; then as a tutor, still more busy with his work and still more solitary; and above all, during the last few years, when all his thought and leisure had been given to his book on Ionic philosophers. How many years was it altogether? Eight,

no, ten— And then, as she seemed to be really interested, he gave a sketch, half humorous and half serious, of his life in college. A bare monastic life it seemed to himself when he came to describe it, a monotonous life and empty. So little to tell of, in so many years; but then how long ago it seemed! "But dear me!" Craik exclaimed at last, with a blush, "I don't think I have ever talked so much of myself before. It sounds rather dull, I'm afraid."

Miss Lamb stopped for a moment. "Dull! Mr. Craik!" she cried. "Oh, no, I think it is noble! To have achieved so much, already. You don't know how I have been interested! Only it is so,—I mean it makes me seem so—so— I suppose you hate women." "Oh no—no!" "I mean, look down on them, despise them." "No! why I—" "I'm afraid you really do, only you're too polite to say so. You don't think, do you, that they could understand philosophy?" "Of course they can, quite as well as we do, if they would only try." "Do you think it would be any use my trying? Really, do you really? I should so love to, if it would be of any use. You know, I have always wanted to understand about it, and there is hardly any one in the world I admire so much as the philosophers. They are the real leaders of the world, Socrates and Emerson and Carlyle. And a frivolous life like mine seems sometimes so— But then people will never believe I am in earnest, and they all make fun of me, and discourage me so. Perhaps they are right; but I have never had any one to help me." "Oh, I am sure they are wrong!" Craik cried. "If you would only try. Do you think I could,—could help you?" "Oh, you are too kind! And perhaps, if you wouldn't mind coming to see me some afternoon, to talk to me about it. And maybe you would bring your book; I should so love to see it. And then if you would let me look at one or two of your lectures, those you have for just the stupidest of your pupils.

No! don't tell me I am not stupid, for I am, I assure you. And I have no right to ask you to come; you are so busy." "Oh, but I should be only too delighted! If I may; if you don't think I should be a—with ladies you know, I am always so afraid of being a bore." She smiled at him. "Ah, you do yourself injustice, Mr. Craik. Indeed you do! But come," she added suddenly, "we must be going back to the garden. How I hate to leave this dear old cloister!" "Must we really go?" "Yes, we really must. Isn't it horrid, when you have had such an interesting talk, to have to go back and say stupid and silly things to stupid and silly people?"

They left the cloisters, and crossing the quadrangle, they stopped for a moment before entering the garden, and looked at the blue picture set in an archway of gray walls, the blue picture of the afternoon light and air in the depth and distance of the garden. "How pretty! It's like,—what is it like?" "Like standing in the past, and looking into the present?" Craik suggested. "Yes, it's like that. But I mean the people, the way they look so far off and blue, as if they were under water. There's something else it reminds me of." "A tank at an aquarium, when you look through the plate-glass." "Yes, it is like that, really!" "With Professors and Heads of Houses swimming about like old fat carp." "Oh, Mr. Craik, how can you, for shame!" Miss Lamb seemed in high spirits now that they were in sight of the garden-party, and her voice was full of laughter.

She paused again when she got through the archway. "Tell me, Mr. Craik," she said, "is this the tower you live in? And the gargoyle you told me about? I should so like to see him. He must be charming. That face up there, peering over the roof? Oh yes, I see. How too delightful! My! isn't that quaint? Just think, he looks back on the past, and on the present, and on the town; and—it symbolizes—

symbolizes—life, doesn't it?" "Yes, —perhaps it does," Craik said rather dubiously.

"He hasn't exactly a kind expression," Miss Lamb said, looking up again. "No," Craik answered looking up himself, and laughing. "That's his way. Then to-day he's shocked at seeing so many ladies here. He doesn't appreciate ladies, you know." "How horrid of him! Why, what harm can we do here?" "Harm! Why, Miss Lamb," Craik said with quaint politeness, "your visits are our greatest blessings!"

Craik knew the old garden well he thought, and he had certainly been in it in all weathers. But to-day it came over him that he had never seen the place before looking so oddly bright and green and shining. Certainly, when he and Ranken had walked there—. Poor Ranken! Craik smiled a little.

"What are you smiling at?" Miss Lamb asked. "Smiling?" Craik said in embarrassment. "Why, was I smiling?" "Certainly you were. It is strange, really it is, how much you are like a friend of mine in America. The way you smile reminds me so much of him. Really it is quite funny, the resemblance. But perhaps you don't like to be told you look like other people?" "Oh yes, I do." Then he added after a pause, with desperate and awkward courage, "if they are friends of yours!"

Miss Lamb did not seem to notice either his compliment or his blush. "How odd you should know Mr. Ranken," she said musingly. "I've not seen him lately. Is he as sentimental as ever?" "Ranken of St. John's! Why, he's not sentimental. It must be some one else." "He used to be, then; I'm sure it is Mr. Ranken of St. John's. I used to meet him last summer at picnics. I was here then. But Mr. Craik," she added, laughing, "really this garden is like paradise! The undergraduates must fancy they have got back into the garden of Eden." "Indeed you would think so

from the way they avoid the tree of knowledge! They are so much wiser than Adam."

They were in the midst of the party now, and Craik was proud, though somewhat embarrassed, with the attention they attracted, and Mrs. Cotton's smiles of obvious encouragement. Indeed he was almost glad when Cobbe joined them, and planting himself in front of Miss Lamb exclaimed, "Well, Miss Lamb, well! Here I've been waiting half an hour with this ice; it's melted into soup." "I am so sorry," Miss Lamb cried; "come, let's get another." Then her voice changed as she turned her eyes to Craik and said, giving him her hand in her friendly manner, "Good-bye, Mr. Craik; good-bye; you won't forget? To-morrow, isn't it?"

III.

CRAIK took off his hat, wiped his forehead, tried to get some of the dust off his boots and then he rang the bell. "Is Miss Lamb at home?" "Yes, sir; Miss Lamb is in the garden."

Entering, Craik saw a number of hats and sticks in the hall. Miss Lamb, he thought, must have several brothers. He put down his stick, and the book with it, after a moment's hesitation; that was better, he would leave it there, and would come and fetch it when the conversation turned that way. Then, buttoning up his black coat over the lecture-notes that filled his pocket, he followed the servant through the house out into the little garden. It was full of strong sunlight, and seemed full of undergraduates too, but when he stopped blinking he saw there were only four. One was up in a tree, sitting there and swinging his legs; Cobbe lay in a hammock smoking, and two other of Craik's pupils lay on the grass at Miss Lamb's feet, rolling lemons. He stopped for a moment.

"Oh, Mr. Corn—Mr. Craik I mean,"

Miss Lamb called out, "I am so glad to see you." Craik advanced with an awkward smile, and Miss Lamb reached out her right hand most cordially. In her left she held a lemon-squeezer. "How good of you to come! And isn't it hot? Exactly like America, I've been saying. We've just come out into the garden without our hats. Won't you sit down on that rug, if you don't mind? Oh, I nearly forgot; let me introduce you to my aunt, Mrs. Stacey. I guess you know everybody else."

Craik shook hands with a lady who was sitting and knitting in an arbour. Then he settled down on a rug in the sunshine. How he wished that he had not decided at the last moment to wear a tall hat and a long coat! The undergraduates were all in flannels.

Miss Lamb spoke of the garden-party. "Your lovely college! It is too ideal; it is like a dream. And that funny gargoyle! I've been telling auntie all about it. And the cloisters too! You don't know how solemn it made me feel. Now, you needn't laugh, Mr. Cobbe, I really did feel solemn—more solemn, I guess, than you have ever been. Gracious, it is hot!" she added, with a sudden change of subject. "Mr. Craik, let me give you some of this lemon-squash; I made it myself."

"Thanks! I shall be most pleased to have some." Craik's voice seemed to himself to be formal, and his phrase pedantic.

"Oh, but what was I saying?" Miss Lamb went on, looking at the company generally. "You were telling us how solemn you were," Cobbe suggested. "Wasn't it rather a new experience?" "Now, Mr. Cobbe, what a mean thing to say," she replied, with great good-nature. "You're his tutor, Mr. Craik, aren't you? Well, next time you have a chance, I hope you will set him some real horrid work to do. I'm sure he needs it." Miss Lamb said this casually, with a pleasant laugh, as she fanned herself.

No one answered; Craik and even Cobbe coloured, and the undergraduate in the tree suppressed a titter. But Mrs. Stacey at this moment asked by happy chance some question of Craik, addressing him as "Professor Craik," in her high American voice, and he hastened to answer her with effusion.

"Oh, I say!" one of the undergraduates interrupted, "that was a splendid score of yours, Miss Lamb, off the Warden. Perhaps you've not heard it, Mr. Craik, the joke about the garden of Eden!" he said, turning to Craik, who had come to an end of his conversation with Mrs. Stacey. "The Warden was showing Miss Lamb the garden, when she said to him, 'Why it is like the garden of Eden here, Mr. Warden; only I suppose you are wiser than Adam, and don't disturb the tree of knowledge.'"

"My dear," Mrs. Stacey cried, "you didn't really speak so to the sweet old Warden?"

"But I say," Cobbe exclaimed, "how's this, Miss Lamb? Long and Maple Fetters tell that story as having been got off on them, and they seemed to think that they rather scored off you." "They didn't a bit; they were only silly!" "Then you did get it off on them?" "No, I didn't."

"Oh, that explains the story," another undergraduate interposed, "that Mrs. Cotton was trying to tell. It seemed, as she told it, to have no point at all. 'Mr. Warden,' she made you say, 'Mr. Warden, you have a lovely garden here, but I am told you never pick the fruit.' 'The Warden, you know, is so particular about his figs,' she added, 'it is quite a joke with all the Fellows.'" Miss Lamb was silent. After a while, however, when a few other current anecdotes of Mrs. Cotton had been told, and they came to the well-known story of that lady and the cow in St. Giles's, she began to smile, and before long was quite consumed with

merriment, for a siphon of soda-water, fizzing off by mistake in her hands, had sprinkled itself over Cobbe. "You did that on purpose, Miss Lamb, I know you did," he cried, jumping out of the hammock and shaking himself. "Indeed, I didn't! Indeed," she said, convulsed with laughter, "I wouldn't for worlds!"

Her attention was then taken by the youth up in the tree who had been throwing down leaves and bits of stick on the heads of the party below. A piece of bark falling into the jug of lemon-squash, Miss Lamb feigned great wrath and indignation. "I wanted to give Mr. Craik some more; but oh, you haven't drunk what you have! Isn't it sweet enough for you?"

"It is just right, thank you," he said, and he took up the glass, warm now from standing in the sun, and was just going to drink the tepid stuff, when the young lady almost shrieked: "Oh, wait a moment please; there's a poor little bug tumbled into it. Dear little thing! Do take it out—oh, be careful! I can't bear to see anything suffer."

Craik fished the insect out of the lemonade with a blade of grass, and Miss Lamb, putting it down on the ground, poked it tenderly to aid it in its moist attempts to crawl away. Ultimately Craik rose from his uncomfortable posture on the ground. It was a long while, it seemed to him, that he had been sitting there, smiling and solemn in the flaming sunshine, and casting about in his mind for an excuse to go, while the others,—the youth perched up in the tree, Miss Lamb fanning herself and squeezing lemons, Cobbe smoking and slowly swinging in the hammock—laughed and lazily talked, as if their life was

one afternoon of endless Arcadian leisure. But Craik had a morbid sense that his shadow, which he glanced at now and then, had been growing almost as if he were swelling, he and his top hat, and casting a larger shade on the little garden.

"Well, I must be going! We college tutors, you know," he said, feeling pretty stiff in body and mind, but attempting nevertheless a little jauntiness of air.

"Oh, but, Mr. Craik, you mustn't go now!" Miss Lamb cried. "Why, we're all going up the river, to have late tea at Godstow and come home by moonlight; and I am going to take my banjo. I hoped you would come with us!" "I'm sorry, but I must be back." "Well, I'm real sorry too. You must come again." She held his hand in hers for a second, and there was a touch of embarrassment in her manner. "Now you will come again, won't you? It is—it is rather hot just to-day for philosophy, isn't it?" she added, her face brightening with a friendly and apologetic smile.

Craik found his hat and stick, but not his book, in the hall. "I've left a book here," he said to the maid.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir; I thought it was for Miss Lamb, so I put it on the shelf where she puts the other university gentlemen's books that they send. I'll go and bring it, sir."

"Is this it?" she called from a neighbouring room—"Elements of Pishcology"?

"No," said Craik hurriedly; "it's about Asia Minor. 'Life and Thought in—'"

"In hearly Asia Minor, sir?"

"Yes, that's mine," Craik answered, in a voice that was not without a touch of melancholy.

ON MODERN TRAVELLING.

THERE is one charming impression peculiar to railway travelling, that of the twilight hour in the train; but the charm is greater on a short journey, when one is not tired and has not the sense of being uprooted, than on a long one. The movement of the train seems after sunset, particularly in the South where nightfall is rapid, to take a quality of mystery. It glides through a landscape of which the smaller details are effaced, as are likewise effaced the details of the railway itself. And that rapid gliding brings home to one the instability of the hour, of the changing light, the obliterating form. It makes one feel that everything is, as it were, a mere vision: bends of poplared river with sunset redness in their gray swirls; big towered houses of other days; the spectral white fruit trees in the dark fields; the pine tops round, separate, yet intangible, against the sky of unearthly blue; the darkness not descending, as foolish people say it does, from the skies to the earth, but rising slowly from the earth where it has gathered fold upon fold, an emanation thereof, into the sky still pale and luminous, turning its colour to white, its whiteness to gray, till the stars, mere little white specks before, kindle one by one.

Dante, who had travelled so much, and so much against his will, described this hour as turning backwards the wayfarer's longing, and making the heart grow soft of them who had that day bid their friends adieu. It is an hour of bitterness, the cruellest for mingled sweetness, to the exile; and in those days when distances were difficult to overcome, every traveller must in a sense have been somewhat of an exile. But to us, who have not necessarily left our friends, who may

be returning to them, to us accustomed to coming and going, to us hurried along in dreamy swiftmess, it is the hour also when the earth seems full of peace and goodwill; and our pensiveness is only just sad enough to be sweet, not sad enough to be bitter. For every hamlet we pass seems somehow the place where we ought to tarry all our days; every room or kitchen, a red square of light in the dimness with dark figures moving before the window, seems full of people who might be friends; and the hills we have never beheld before, the bends of river, the screen of trees, seem familiar as if we had lived among them in distant days which we think of with longing.

This is the best that can be said, it seems to me, for modern modes of travel. But then, although I have been jolted about a good deal from country to country, and slept in trains on my nurse's knees, and watched all my possessions, from my cardboard donkey and my wax doll to my manuscripts and proof-sheets, overhauled on custom-house counters; but then, despite all this, I have never made a great journey. I have never been to the United States, nor to Egypt, nor to Russia; and it may well be that I shall see the Eleusinian gods, Persephone and whoever else imparts knowledge in ghostland, without ever having set foot in Greece. My remarks are therefore meant for the less fortunate freight of railways and steamers; though do I really envy those who see the wonderful places of the earth before they have dreamed of them, the dreamland of other men revealed to them for the first time in the solid reality of Cook and Gaze?

I would not for the world be misunderstood; I have not the faintest

prejudice against Gaze or Cook. I fervently desire that these gentlemen may ever quicken trains and cheapen hotels; I am ready to be jostled in Alpine valleys and Venetian canals by any number of vociferous tourists, for the sake of the one, schoolmistress, or clerk, or artisan, or curate, who may by this means have reached at last the land east of the sun and west of the moon, the St. Brandan's Isle of his or her longings. What I object to are the well-mannered, well-dressed, often well-informed persons who, having turned Scotland into a sort of Hurlingham, are apparently making Egypt, the Holy Land, Japan, into *succursales* and *dépendances* (I like the good Swiss names evoking couriers and waiters) of their own particularly dull portion of London and Paris and New York. Less externally presentable certainly, but how much more really venerable is the mysterious class of dwellers in obscure pensions; curious beings who migrate without perceiving any change of landscape and people, but only change of fare, from the cheap boarding-house in Dresden to the cheap boarding-house in Florence, Prague, Seville, Rouen, or Bruges. It is a class whom one of nature's ingenious provisions, intended doubtless to maintain a balance of habited and inhabited, directs unconsciously, automatically rather, to the great cities of the past than to those of the present; so that they sit in what were once palaces, castles, princely pleasure-houses, discussing over the stony pears and apples the pleasures and drawbacks, the prices and fares, the dark staircase against the Sunday-ices, of other boarding-houses in other parts of Europe. A quaint race it is, neither marrying nor giving in marriage, and renewed by natural selection among the poor in purse and poor in spirit; but among whom the sentimental traveller, did he still exist, might pick up many droll and melancholy and perhaps chivalrous stories. My main contention then is merely that, before

visiting countries and towns in the body, we ought to have visited them in the spirit; otherwise I fear we might as well sit still at home. I do not mean that we should read about them; some persons I know affect to extract a kind of pleasure from it; but to me it seems dull work. One wants to visit unknown lands in company, not with other men's descriptions, but with one's own wishes and fancies. And very curious such wishes and fancies are, or rather the countries and cities they conjure up, having no existence on any part of the earth's surface, but a very vivid one in one's own mind. Surely most of us, arriving in any interesting place, are already furnished with a tolerable picture or plan thereof; the cathedral on a slant or a rising ground, the streets running uphill or somewhat in a circle, the river here or there, the lie of the land, colour of the houses, nay, the whole complexion of the town, so and so. The reality, so far as my own experience goes, never once tallies with the fancy; but the town of our building is so compact and clear that it often remains in our memory alongside of the town of stone and brick, only gradually dissolving, and then leaving sometimes airy splendours of itself hanging to the solid structures of its prosaic rival.

Another curious thing to note is how certain real scenes will sometimes get associated in our minds with places we have never beheld, to such a point that the charm of the known is actually enhanced by that of the unknown. I remember a little dell and hilltop in the High Alps, which, with its huge larches and mountain pines, its tufts of bee-haunted heather and thyme among the mossy boulders, its overlooking peak and glimpses of far down lakes, became dear to me much less for its own sake than because it always brought to my mind the word *Thrace*, and with it a vague fleeting image of satyrs and menads, a bar of the music of Orpheus. And

less explicable than this, a certain rolling table-land, not more remote than the high road to Rome, used at one time to impress me with a mysterious consciousness of the plains of Central Asia; a ruined byre, a heap of white-washed stones, among the thistles and stubbles of a Fife hillside, had for me once a fascination due to the sense that it must be like Algeria.

Has any painter ever fixed on canvas such visions, distinct and haunting, of lands he had never seen, Claude or Turner, or the Flemish people who painted the little towered and domed celestial Jerusalem? I know not. The nearest thing of the kind was a wonderful erection of brown paper and (apparently) ingeniously arranged shavings, built up in rock-like fashion, covered with little green toy-box trees, and dotted here and there with bits of mirror glass and cardboard houses, which once puzzled me considerably in the parlour of a cottage. "Do tell me what that is?" at last rose to my lips. "That," answered my hostess very slowly, "that is a work of my late husband; a representation of the Halps as close as 'e could imagine it, for 'e never was abroad." I often think of that man "who never was abroad," and of his representation of the Alps; of the hours of poetic vision, of actual creation perhaps from sheer strength of longing, which resulted in that quaint work of art. As close as he could imagine them! He had read, then, about the Alps, read perhaps in Byron or some Radelifian novel on a stall; and he had wondered and wondered till the vision had come, ready for pasteboard and toy-trees and glue and broken mirror to embody it! And meanwhile I, who am obliged to cross those very Alps twice every year, I try to do so at night, to rumble and rattle up and down their gorges in a sleeping-car! There seems something wrong in this; something wrong in the world's adjustments, not really in me, for I swear it is respect for the Alps

which makes me thus avoid their sight.

And here is the moment for stating my plea against our modern, rapid travelling: there is to decent minds a certain element of humiliation therein, as I suspect there is in every *royal road*. There is something almost superhumanly selfish in this rushing across countries without giving them a thought, indeed with no thoughts in us save of our convenience, inconvenience, food, sleep, weariness. The whole of Central Europe is thus reduced, for our feelings, to an arrangement of buffets and custom-houses, its acres checked off on our sensorium as so many jolts. For it is not often that respectable people spend a couple of days, or even three, so utterly engrossed in themselves, so without intellectual relation or responsibility to their surroundings, living in a moral stratum not above ordinary life, but below it. Perhaps it is this suspending of connexion with all interests which makes such travelling restful to very busy persons, and agreeable to very foolish ones. But to decent, active folk it is, I maintain, humiliating, humiliating to become so much by comparison in one's own consciousness; and I suspect that the vague sense of self-disgust attendant on days thus spent is a sample of the self-disgust we feel very slightly (and ought to feel very strongly) whenever our wretched little self is allowed to occupy the whole stage of our perceptions. There is in M. Zola's *Bête Humaine* a curious picture of a train, one train after another, full of eager modern life, being whirled from Paris to Havre through the empty fields, before cottages and old-world houses miles remote from any town. But in reality is not the train the empty thing, and are not those solitary houses and pastures that which is filled with life? The Roman express thus rushes to Naples, Egypt, India, the far East, the great Austral islands, cutting in two the cypress

avenue of a country house of the Val d'Arno, Neptune with his conch, a huge figure of the seventeenth century, looking on from an artificial grotto. What to him is this miserable little swish past of to-day? There is only one circumstance when this vacuity, this suspension of all real life, is in its place; when one is hurrying to some dreadful goal, a deathbed or perhaps a fresh-made grave. The soul is precipitated forward to one object, one moment, and cannot exist meanwhile; *ruit* not *hora*, but *anima*; emptiness suits passion and suffering, for they empty out the world.

Be this as it may, it will be a great pity if we lose a certain sense of wonder at distance overcome, a certain emotion of change of place. This emotion,—paid for no doubt by much impatience and weariness where the plains were wide, the mountains high, or the roads persistently straight—must have been one of the great charms of the old mode of travelling. You savoured the fact of each change in the lie of the land, of each variation in climate and province, the difference between the chestnut and the beech zones, for instance, in the south, of the fir and the larch in the Alps; the various types of window, roof, chimney, or well, nay, the different fold of the cap or kerchief of the market women. One inn, one square, one town hall or church, introduced you gradually to its neighbour. We feel this in the talk of old people, those who can remember buying their team at Calais, of elderly ones who chartered their *vetturino* at Marseilles or Nice; in certain scraps in the novels even of Thackeray, giving the sense of this gradual occupation of the continent by relays. One of Mr. Ruskin's drawings at Oxford evokes it strongly in me. On what railway journey would he have come across that little town of Rheinfelden (where is Rheinfelden?), would he have wandered round those quaint towered walls, over that bridge, along that grassy walk?

I can remember, in my childhood, the Alps before they had railways; the enormous remoteness of Italy, the sense of its lying down there, far, far away in its southern sea; the immense length of this straight road from Bellinzona to the lake, the endlessness of the winding valleys. Now, as I said in relation to that effigy of the Alps by the man who had never been abroad, I get into my bunk at Milan, and waking up, see, in the early morning crispness, the glass green Reuss tear past, and the petticoated turrets of Lucerne. Once also (and I hope not once and never again) I made an immense journey through Italy in a pony cart. We seemed to traverse all countries and climates: lush, stifling valleys with ripening maize and grapes; oak-woods where rows of cypresses showed roads long gone, and crosses told of murders; desolate heaths high on hill tops, and stony gorges full of myrtle; green irrigated meadows with plashing water-wheels, and gray olive groves, so that in the evening we felt homesick for that distant, distant morning: yet we had only covered as much ground as from London to Dover! And how immensely far off from Florence did we not feel when, four hours after leaving its walls, we arrived in utter darkness at the friendly mountain farm, and sat down to supper in the big bare room, where high-backed chairs and the plates above the immense chimney-piece loomed and glimmered in the half-light; feeling, as if in a dream, the cool night air still in our throats, the jingle of cart-bells and chirp of wayside crickets still in our ears! Where was Florence then? As a fact it was just sixteen miles off.

To travel in this way one should, however, as old John Evelyn advises, "diet with the natives." Our ancestors (for one takes for granted of course that one's ancestors were *milords*) were always plentifully furnished, I observe, with letters of introduction. They were necessary

when persons of distinction carried their bedding on mules and rode in coaches escorted by blunderbusses, like John Evelyn himself. It is this dieting with the natives which brings one fully in contact with a country's reality. At the tables of one's friends, while being strolled through the gardens or driven across country, one learns all about the life, thoughts, feelings of the people; the very gossip of the neighbourhood becomes instructive, and you touch the past through traditions of the family. Here the French put up the maypole in 1796; there the beautiful abbess met her lover; that old bowed man was the one who struck the Austrian colonel at Milan before 1859. 'Tis the mode of travelling that constituted the delight and matured the genius of Stendhal, king of cosmopolitans and grand master of the psychologic novel. To my kind friends wherever I have any, but most perhaps in Northern Italy, is due among other kinds of gratitude, gratitude for having travelled in this way.

But there is another way of travelling, more suitable methinks to the poet. For what does the poet want with details of reality when he possesses its universal essence, or with local manners and historic tradition, seeing that his work is for all times and all men? Mr. Browning, I was told last year by his dear friends at Asolo, first came upon the kingdom of Kathe Queen by accident, perhaps not having heard its name or not remembering it, in the course of a long walking tour from Venice to the Alps. It was the first time he was in Italy, nay, abroad, and he had come from London to Venice by sea. That village of palaces on the hill top, with the Lombard plain at its feet and the great Alps at its back, with its legends of the queen of Cyprus, was therefore one of the first impressions of mainland Italy which the poet could have received. And one can understand *Pippa Passes* resulting therefrom, better than from his years of familiarity with Florence.

Pippa, Sebald, Ottima, Jules, his bride, the Bishop, the Spy, nay, even Queen Kate and her page, are all born of that sort of misinterpretation of places, times, and stories which is so fruitful in poetry, because it means the begetting of things in the image of the poet's own soul, rather than the fashioning them to match something outside it. Even without being a poet you may profit in an especial manner by travelling in a country where you know no one, provided you have in you that scrap of poetic fibre without which poets and poetry are caviare to you. There is no doubt that wandering about in the haunts of the past undisturbed by the knowledge of the present is marvellously favourable to the historic, the poetical emotion. The American fresh from the States thinks of Johnson and Dickens in Fleet Street; at Oxford or Cambridge he has raptures (are any raptures like these?) into which, like notes in a chord and overtones in a note, there enters the deliciousness, the poignancy of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Turner. The Oxford or Cambridge man, on the other hand, will have similar raptures in some boarding-house at Venice or Florence; raptures rapturous in proportion almost to his ignorance of the language and the people. Do not let us smile, dear friends who have lived in Rome till you are Romans, dear friends who are Romans yourselves, at the foreigner with his Baedeker, turning his back to the Colosseum in his anxiety to reach it, and ashamed as well as unable to ask his way. That Goth or Vandal, very likely, is in the act of possessing Rome, of making its wonder and glory his own, consubstantial to his soul; Rome is his for the moment. Is it ours? Alas!

Nature, Fate, I know not whether the mother or the daughter, they are so like each other, looks with benignity upon these poor ignorant, solitary tourists, and gives them what she denies to those who have more leisure and opportunity. I cannot explain by any other reason a fact which is

beyond all possibility of doubt, and patent to the meanest observer; namely that it is always during our first sojourn in a place, during its earlier part, and more particularly when we are living prosaically at inns and boarding-houses, that something happens,—a procession, a serenade, a street-fight, a fair or a pilgrimage—which shows the place in a particularly characteristic light, and which never occurs again. The very elements are desired to perform for the benefit of the stranger. I remember a thunderstorm, the second night I was ever at Venice, lighting up St. George's, the Salute, the whole lagoon as I have never seen it since. I can testify to having seen the Alhambra under snow, a sparkling whiteness lying soft on the myrtle hedges, and the reflexion of arches and domes waving, with the drip of melted snow from the roofs, in the long stagnant tanks. If I lived in Grenada, or went back there, should I ever see this wonder again? It was ordered merely because I had just come, and was lodging at an inn.

Yes, Fate is friendly to those who travel rarely, who go abroad to see abroad, not to be warm or cold, or to meet the people they may meet anywhere

else. Honour the tourist; he walks in a halo of romance. The cosmopolitan abroad desists from flannel shirts because he is always at home; and he knows to a nicety hours and places which require a high hat. But does that compensate? There is yet another mystery connected with travelling, but 'tis too subtle almost for words. All I can ask is, do you know what it is to meet, say in some college room, or on the staircase of an English country house, or even close behind the front door in Bloomsbury, the photograph of some Florentine relief or French cathedral, the black, gaunt Piranesi print of some Roman ruin, and to feel suddenly Florence, Rouen, Reims, or Rome, the whole of their presence distilled, as it were, into one essence of emotion?

What does it mean? That in this solid world only delusion is worth having? Nay; but that nothing can come into the presence of that capricious despot, our fancy, which has not dwelt six months and six in the purlieus of its palace, steeped, like the candidates for Ahasuerus's favour, in sweet odours and myth.

VERNON LEE.

THE PARTRIDGE.

PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING, says the law, ends on the first day of February. We only wish it did. So soon as the pairing season begins it is the turn of the village loafer, who usually chooses Sunday morning for his amusement, and sauntering along the footpaths or under the hedges with his gun in his pocket shoots the birds, which are then quite tame, either as they crouch on the ground, where he can easily see them, or as they get up under his feet and offer him the easiest of all possible shots. In a country church you may often during the lessons or the prayers catch the sound of a distant gun, which tells you that the villain is at work. When the birds are bagged he either eats them himself without any of Mr. Saintsbury's sauce, or drinks them out at the public-house, where they are consumed by the landlord, a man probably not very fastidious about age or flavour. But, in spite of all his enemies, in fur, feather, or fustian, the partridge still flourishes, and in the first volume of a new series, *Fur and Feather*, we have an exhaustive work upon him, embracing his whole career from the shell to the stubble, from the stubble to the game-bag, and from the game-bag to the dinner-table.¹

One might have supposed that the Badminton Library, taken together with all the other books on the same subject which have recently been written, would, for the present at least, have satisfied the public appetite for this species of literature. Such, however, seems not to be the case. Works on

shooting of every kind, from an elephant to a jacksnipe, appear to grow in popularity every day. *Fur and Feather* (as it has already amply proved) is offered to no glutted market or jaded taste; and the phenomena is one to be taken into consideration in calculating the future of the game-laws and the prospects of field-sports. It may fairly be inferred that those who like to read about shooting would also like to shoot if the opportunity were offered them; while as a corollary to this proposition it may further be concluded that many of the objections to field-sports, which at one time used to be swallowed wholesale by those who knew nothing about them, have vanished in the light of knowledge supplied by competent authorities. Since sportsmen have taken up the pen themselves, and educated gentlemen, combining practical experience with literary ability, have begun to write upon the subject, it has come to be generally understood that hunting and shooting are not only consistent with refinement and humanity, but that they have a real and very necessary work to do in an age of over-worked brains and keen intellectual competition like our own.

Regarded exclusively from this point of view birds and beasts of game assume a new character as important sanitary agents; and on the whole I think it may be said that the partridge heads the list. The grouse and the red deer may give us harder walking. To the snipe, the woodcock, and the wild duck may belong the special charm, which all true sportsmen appreciate, of thorough wildness. The pheasant may demand a cooler head and a stronger nerve, but the sport supplied by all of them is limited to a comparatively short time, and to a

¹ THE FUR AND FEATHER SERIES. *The Partridge*, by the Rev. H. A. Macpherson, A. J. Stuart-Wortley, and George Saintsbury; with illustrations by A. J. Stuart-Wortley, A. Thorburn, and C. Whympere. London, 1894.

smaller number of persons than partridge-shooting. A sufficient number of birds for ordinary sport can be preserved at a very trifling cost. They are always within reasonable distance of us, and they can be shot comfortably during the whole three months of September, October, and November, and with some additional difficulty to the end of the season. In former times, when wild pheasants were scattered over a rough country abounding in copses, shaws, furze, and heather, and men went out prepared to be satisfied with five or six brace, as much or even more might have been said of pheasant-shooting. But nowadays all our pheasants are kept up in close coverts, and sportsmen anxious to make up the large bags which are now in fashion cannot shoot through the same woods more than about twice a year. On the tendency at the present day to conduct partridge-shooting on a similar principle I shall have something more to say presently. But even when smaller numbers are killed, and the woods are shot oftener, standing in a ride, or sauntering slowly alongside the beaters, is not the same thing as a continuous walk of twelve or fifteen miles over an open country. To the partridge, therefore, precedence is rightly awarded in this series. In the volume devoted to him the department of natural history is undertaken by the Rev. H. A. Macpherson, the sporting one by Mr. Archibald Stuart-Wortley, and the culinary by Mr. George Saintsbury. All are masters in Israel; but Mr. Saintsbury's receipts are sprinkled with a delicate humour which adds greatly to their piquancy.

The partridge is a citizen of the world, and is found in one shape or another in all quarters of the globe, though the American partridge, or Virginian quail, is not allowed by Yarrell to be a true partridge. He must have been a bird familiar to the Jews, for we find him used as an illustration when many other birds would apparently have done just as well had

their habits been equally well known. In the Book of Samuel he is hunted on the mountains; in Jeremiah he or she, as the reader chooses, is sitting upon stolen eggs; in Ecclesiastes he is a decoy bird. The comparisons in which he figures are not very savoury ones. In one place some analogy is sought to be established between a partridge and a flea; in another he is likened to a man brooding over ill-gotten gains, which come to no good; in a third to a spy. The passage referring to eggs which the partridge has stolen from another bird's nest is specially interesting from the fact recorded by Yarrell that a partridge has been known to carry off a whole nest of pheasant's eggs when her own had been destroyed. This, however, could hardly be called larceny, as the old pheasant was dead; nor was it followed by the retribution which awaited the dishonest act imputed to the bird by Jeremiah. Yarrell's partridge hatched the eggs and brought up the young ones. Let us hope, therefore, that the charge was due to some misunderstanding on the prophet's part; but it shows, at all events, that the partridge must have been a bird whose habits were carefully observed by Jewish naturalists. The third passage above quoted shows also that the son of Sirach was acquainted with the mode of taking partridges, which, as it is also described by both Aristotle and Pliny (we sportsmen like to show off a bit of scholarship now and then), may be presumed to have been general among the ancients. In Aristotle's history of animals we have a very circumstantial account of the partridge decoy, the call-bird being styled *ὁ θηπευτής*. He says that he has heard from experts that when the wild bird has once been attracted by the call, he makes signs to the caged bird to hold her noise, for fear of attracting other suitors with whom he should be obliged to fight.

In Italy both the partridge and the pheasant seem to have been kept in

the poultry-yard, and Martial places them in company with the peacock, the goose, the guinea-fowl, the flamingo, and the game-fowls which were brought from Rhodes. The partridge he calls *picta perdix*, which some commentators suppose to mean the red-leg. But if it does it refers, I should say, rather to the plumage of that bird than to his shanks; for he does remind one rather of a painted bird, which the gray partridge never does. The red-leg has acquired an evil reputation among English sportsmen from his habit of running instead of flying before his pursuers, thereby trying the patience of pointers beyond all endurance, and often going near to spoil them. This, however, is rather a virtue than a vice in these days of driving, and I only mention it because it is curious that the habit does not seem to characterise them everywhere. I have been told (but I do not vouch for the truth of the assertion) that the red-legged partridge of Greece will lie just as well to dogs as the English bird; but whether the Greek partridge is the French or the Barbary variety I know not. Most of the sport, however, which Englishmen have enjoyed in France has been with the gray-breasts, as the red-legs are not everywhere predominant in that country; and in Brittany we are told by that good sportsman Mr. Horlock that he has shot over ground swarming with English birds.

As the partridge is found in all countries, so is he found in all situations; rock and valley, stubble and heather, bog and pasture, are all frequented in turn by him. I have often found coveys in Anglesey on swamps which it was difficult to walk over. They are fond of lying among the stones on the sea-beach, and in fields which have been manured with seaweed; and when driven from these will often disappear over the edge of the cliff, leading the inexperienced shooter to wonder what can have become of them. They have not flown out to sea, that is certain. The

keeper knows where they are; they have dropped down among the boulders three hundred feet below you, where they set man, dog, and gun alike at defiance.

Whether partridges are migratory or not is still a moot point among naturalists. Mr. Macpherson thinks that continental partridges move from one country to another across rivers and mountains, but that neither these nor the English partridge would ever take so long a flight as across the Channel. "It is perfectly true," he says, "that from time to time a covey of partridges lands in a more or less exhausted state upon the beach of our eastern or southern coast, under circumstances which render the hypothesis of a covey of French or Belgian partridges crossing the German Ocean perfectly tenable. But however plausible such a suggestion may appear, we should, on the whole, shrink from accepting it as proven upon any but the strongest evidence. It would be more safe to surmise that, though the birds in question may have flown in from sea, they had previously left some neighbouring point of our own coast, and had deflected from their course to catch up the land again." Yarrell rather favours the theory of migration; and he points out that red-legs have been shot on the Dorsetshire coast where none had ever been turned down, and thinks it quite probable that they had come across from the Channel Islands. Why, then, if these came, did not more come? Red-legs were unknown in this country in the middle of the last century, but they abounded in France. It is odd that, if migratory, they should never have thought of taking a trip to England of their own accord till about thirty years ago. As for their being found in Dorsetshire, we need not have recourse to Yarrell's conjecture to account for this. After they had once been established in any part of England, the eggs might easily have got mixed by

the London egg-sellers, for we presume these gentry existed at the date named by Yarrell. I myself have seen a single red-legged partridge shot in Leicestershire about twenty years ago where none had been seen before, and which, at that distance inland, could hardly have been an immigrant.

And now to turn to another branch of our subject, full of very thorny questions which have been debated with considerable warmth by rival schools of sport, and are even now at times the source of very bitter controversy. It may have been observed that when called upon to give an opinion on any business, profession, or occupation regarding some point which is not quite clear to him, a prudent man is fond of taking refuge in the assertion that the system is in "a transition state." If I do not make use of this convenient formula on the present occasion, it is partly because most things are always in a transition state, partly because there is no mystery about the changes which time and progress have wrought in the art of shooting game as practised throughout the British Islands. Whether the change is likely to go still further, or whether the future conditions of English agriculture and proprietorship may not, contrary to general expectation, have a tendency to arrest it, are inquiries too extensive for the present paper. What we have here to consider is the fact that partridge-shooting has, during the last fifty years, been losing more and more of its old character as a branch of field sports in which the art of finding and following up game stood upon a level with the art of killing it, and has been acquiring more and more the character of an exercise in which, by the great majority of those who engage in it, regard is paid to marksmanship only. Yet the old system, from which the altered face of the country has made some departure inevitable, still holds its ground so tenaciously, and is looked back

upon with a longing, lingering eye by so many good sportsmen and good shots who are the greatest proficient in the new, that both must be considered equally entitled to the attention of writers on the partridge. Which of the two affords the better sport is a matter of taste whereon nobody has a right to dogmatise, and it depends, moreover, a good deal on the meaning attached to the word sport. On this point even doctors disagree, and some of the best known shots in England, who will on an average kill nineteen driven birds out of twenty, may be found willing to allow that shooting over dogs was better sport if only it were any longer possible.

The change in partridge-shooting is due partly to necessity and partly to choice; what was begun by the first has been continued and extended by the second. I cannot undertake to say exactly how many years ago it is since the sickle fell into general disuse, and the wheat crop began to be shorn off close to the ground; at a rough guess the interval might cover about one generation. It must have been after the repeal of the Corn Laws that a gradual change began to take place in English farming, it being found necessary both to reduce the cost and increase the yield of corn-growing if free-trade was to be weathered. Hedgerows were either grubbed up or confined within narrower limits; weeds and rubbish, thorns and thistles, were got rid of; turnips were more generally drilled, and more swedes were sown in proportion to white turnips. Then, when finally the old wheat stubbles disappeared, sportsmen began to find out that in the most highly cultivated parts of England at all events partridge-shooting was no longer what it had been. But it was a long time before the change became general, and even to this day it is by no means universal. There are districts quite unsuitable for driving where two men might get their thirty brace a

day over dogs, who would hardly get ten brace without them. Whether this is to be regarded as an enviable or a contemptible survival my sporting readers must determine for themselves.

What the man who shoots over dogs considers real sport is to watch them hunting turnips, stubbles, or large grass fields crossing each other and quartering the ground at full speed and with beautiful precision, then suddenly stopping short as they wind their quarry, and presently hardening to stone as they become quite sure of its proximity. If only one dog has found, then to see the other back him is one of the chief delights of such a day. Such a sight will repay the partridge-shooter for many miles of bad sport. But what he likes still better, perhaps, after he has walked up to Don or Sancho and got his right and left out of the whirring covey which spread out all round him, is to follow it up till it is thoroughly broken and dispersed, and then to pick up the odd birds by ones and twos, here out of a hedge-row there out of a patch of rushes in the middle of a badly-drained pasture, now one from the brook side, now another from the straggling bits of gorse which have sprung up in the grass field lying between the turnips and the fox-covert. These, most likely, will all be found by the dogs, and after five or six lovely points, followed by as many successful shots, our friend will feel himself in the seventh heaven. But it is quite clear that for the full enjoyment of this kind of shooting the bits of gorse and the badly-drained pastures and the rushes and the hedgerows must all be there, and in many parts of England we may look for them in vain. Thistles and brambles, and all the odds and ends of rubbish in which single birds took refuge when the covey was broken, only remain now in sheltered situations; and if we would find ground where setters can be worked to the greatest advantage, we need not look for it in the metropolis of partridge-

shooting. Even in Norfolk and Suffolk there is room for dogs; but it is not in these countries that all the pleasure can be got out of them which they are capable of affording.

It will be seen that the shooter over dogs has been engaged during a good part of the day in finding birds, for which purpose it is necessary that he should be acquainted with the habits of the partridge, and with the likeliest places in which to find him according to the season, the weather, and the time of day. Add to this that he must understand the art of getting round the birds so as to drive them in the right direction, and we have an assemblage of qualities the exercise of which in the eyes of this class of sportsman is of the essence of the business. The finding and the pursuit of game, he would say, was the differential element in his own definition of sport. There was probably never a better and truer sportsman in the best sense of the term than Lord Althorpe. He said, in his last years that it had been "the passion of his life to see sporting dogs hunt," whether pointers or foxhounds. This was *his* idea of sport, and some will still agree with him.

This is one kind of partridge-shooting. The other is described by Mr. Stuart-Wortley in a passage which deserves to remain for ever the *locus classicus* on the subject. It is too long to quote, but the whole scene is brought before us with an artist's hand. The hopes and fears which throng the moments of suspense, not unlike the sensations of a man waiting at the covert-side for the first whimper of the hounds; then the shouts, the rush of pinions, the kills and the misses, the stifled pangs with which a man feels that "his eye has been wiped": all this is described with rare truth and power. But after all, the pleasure afforded by the drive seems to consist almost exclusively in the shooting, and the question is whether, considering the shooting alone, the superiority of driving in this respect is sufficient by itself to

make it preferable to the other method. When, for any reason, there is no choice and driving is absolutely necessary, there is of course no room for argument. It may be granted that in many parts of England the partridge-shooter has no option. But supposing a man to be offered the choice between some first-rate driving ground in Norfolk, and some first-rate ground for dogs in another county, which of the two would a genuine sportsman select? Mr. Wortley leaves this an open question, as a sensible man should. As much skill, it is said, as much knowledge of the partridge and his ways is required to organise a big drive as to make a good bag over pointers. Possibly; but who are called upon for the display of these qualities? I am supposing, of course, that the man who shoots over dogs works them, or helps to work them, himself, arranges the beat, and follows his own judgment in the pursuit of broken coveys. Now in the case of driving, all this kind of work is necessarily limited to the keepers, with the addition perhaps of the host himself. The row of guns planted along the hedges have no part in it whatever. Their share of the day's sport is limited to knocking over the birds; and if we are told that this is just the same in the modern system of pheasant-shooting, we reply that this undoubted truth makes the matter no better. In fact, it is the growing tendency to assimilate partridge-shooting more and more to pheasant-shooting, which seems to me one great objection to driving. "In these days," says Mr. Wortley, "the demand is not so much for a great number of days' shooting as for good and well managed dogs, quality as to the number of dogs, quality and quantity combined, where possible, as regards the shooting." And it may be gathered from various passages that for driving-purposes the same ground ought only to be beaten once, or at most twice in a season. But setting

aside the question of sport altogether, it is obvious that this kind of shooting is necessarily confined to a comparatively small circle, and has little in common with the "average or popular partridge-shooting," on which the great majority of English sportsmen are dependent; and as it is sport of this description which, by its wide diffusion among all classes, is one of the best guarantees we have for the maintenance of the game-laws, it is only politic on the part of our tutorial gunners to refrain from sneering at it. It is no small part of the praise due to Mr. Wortley that he carefully avoids this error, and gives every man his due. "I am far from saying," he writes, "that a man has not a perfect right, or is not often justified, in subdividing his sport over a large number of days, especially if he lives from week to week at home for the greater part of the year. In this case he will do much more good on and near his own estate than he who is constantly travelling about, racing, or Londonising; but he will be dependent on a different class for his guns."

Justified most assuredly he is. It is these very men living on their estates all the year round and shooting or hunting through the whole season who are the mainstay of field-sports of every kind. How long would fox-hunting flourish if it were limited to Melton, and not supported by thousands of sportsmen living in less favoured districts who regularly hunt from home, and find as much pleasure in seeing hounds work a woodland fox, as others do in flying over the big grass fields from Billesdon Coplow to Carlton Clump?

But Mr. Wortley has something better to say than this on his own early days.

It must also be borne in mind on the side of the "walker" that he can enjoy a number of days of a perfectly charming sort with two or three intimate friends, and without the trouble or expense of a large organised party. . . . I used to

pass many such at different places, and nowhere more pleasantly than with my uncle, the late Lord Wenlock, at Eserick. He and his eldest son (the present Governor of Madras), and I, have shot many a day together, and so well did we know one another's form, and every inch of the 17,000 acres, or thereabouts, which make up that well-known sporting estate, that I verily believe on that ground no three men could have beaten us. My uncle was almost like a boy himself, singularly active and powerful, and an exceptionally fine shot. We understood every wave of his hand or look of his eye, and learnt thoroughly all that can be done by three guns and a few well-trained men on the war-path for partridges, whether in the hot days of early September, when a good-natured tenant of the old-fashioned sort would insist on our walking through his standing barley or beans, or in the late October, when the fields were cleared, and by running, circumventing, half-mooning, and occasional impromptu driving, we managed to get the birds into a scanty field of cold wet swedes or a welcome bit of gorse cover.

This is the poetry of partridge-shooting if you like! Shooting driven birds from behind a hedge is a prosy and mechanical business compared with the beans and the barley and the old-fashioned tenant. Mr. Wortley certainly does all that man could do to make us find poetry in driving; but there is nothing picturesque in it, nothing left to the imagination. That it is full of excitement I readily allow; but after all it must stand or fall by its superiority as a test of marksmanship, by the number of shots which it offers to each man of the party, and by the power which, in common with pheasant-shooting it helps to develop, of keeping our heads where everything combines to make us lose them. Walking up birds, whether with dogs or without, teaches us the same useful lesson; for it is not all at once that either boy or man is able to keep perfectly cool when a huge covey of partridges rise whirring and screaming all round him, and he has to pick out his right and left so as not to interfere with his neighbour. I have seen a man who could cut down wild French

partridges rising singly at forty yards or more without missing one in a dozen, who could not touch a feather if a covey rose just under his feet. But I freely admit that what the old style taught us well the new style teaches us better. Let each then stand upon its own bottom. Speaking only for my own part I think that shooting to dogs is the better sport, and shooting to beaters the better practice; that walking after birds is the better exercise, and standing to receive them the better discipline; that the one sharpens our observation, and the other matures our self-possession; and that on the whole perhaps the balance inclines a little in favour of the old system because of the greater scope which it affords for the exercise of those arts which our ancestors comprehended under the name of woodcraft. "Master hunts to ride, and I ride to hunt," is a saying attributed to Assheton Smith's huntsman; and it very accurately expresses the difference between two different kinds of sportsmen, whether in hunting or shooting. As covers gradually disappear, and there are fewer places where game can lie close till discovered by the dog's nose or the beater's stick, it is only natural that the search for it should gradually lose some of its attractions, and the conception of sport come to be more and more closely associated with the pleasure of killing it. Men who shoot for the sake of shooting, as others hunt for the sake of riding, then become the most conspicuous figures in the world of sport; and this, of course, is what has happened to us in England.

With the change in legitimate partridge-shooting a change (to some extent a corresponding change) has come over the irregular practitioner in the shape of the poacher. There are now but two classes of poachers; the villager who knows how to snare a hare or knock over a partridge in the pairing season, as already described, and the town poacher, who works in gangs and makes a regular

business of it. Formerly, however, there either was, or was supposed to be, an intermediate kind of poacher, who usually worked by himself, though he too looked to poaching for a livelihood as much as the gangs do. He worked chiefly with a gun, and his depredations were mostly committed among pheasants. Such a man as this is described by Captain Marryat in his well-known novel of *The Poacher*, and such a man, I think, must have been in the mind of Mr. Stuart-Wortley himself when he painted his capital picture of *The Poacher's Hut*,—he will forgive me if that is not the exact title. Poachers of this class, however, could only have existed where the population was thin, where preserving was not very strict, and where the country was wild and woody, affording plenty of hiding places for these lawless, if interesting, personages. But such men will scarcely be found now except, perhaps, in parts of the Scottish Highlands where they are said still to linger. The great enemy which the partridge has to fear is quite a different style of man. He goes out at night with three or four companions, and a long net which is dragged over the top of the stubble in a slanting position, and as the birds lie close it can often be dropped over a covey before they have had time to get beyond it. It is to prevent the net from working that the fields should be carefully bushed; that is to say stuck over at short intervals with brambles or branches of thorn set in the ground so lightly that being pulled up by the net they stick in the meshes and effectually disable it. It is seldom that a whole covey is taken at once; but partridges fly very short distances at night, and the birds that escape are usually picked up by twos and threes before the night's work is over. By far the best and most circumstantial account of modern poaching is to be found in an article in *The Quarterly Review* for October, 1891, and as there is nothing

more to be said about partridge-poaching which does not apply equally to rabbits and pheasants, with one parting remark I shall take my leave of the subject. Mr. Wortley says that "bushing must not be confined to grass fields only." Of course it must not; but who, or what, can have made such a warning necessary? At all events, in those parts of England where my own personal experience of these matters has been mainly acquired, the birds lie in the stubbles quite as often as in the grass, if not much oftener; and on some estates that I know I cannot remember to have ever seen a grass field bushed at all. That might have been a great mistake, but it shows what the keepers thought about it.

And now, having considered the partridge from the naturalist's and the sportsman's point of view, let us look at him from the epicure's; and here of course our remarks can be little more than an echo of Mr. Saintsbury's. Whatever you can do with anything, he says, you can do with a partridge. No form of cookery will come amiss to him. But the man who is blessed with a sound mind in a sound body, and has a proper partridge in his larder (a young English bird who has been well fed on ant's eggs), will never do more than one thing with him—that is, simply roast him thoroughly, but not too much, and then eat him with bread sauce and fried potatoes; what remains he will eat cold for breakfast the next morning, with a little cayenne pepper; when unadorned adorned the most. As for all the artificial modes of dressing this delightful bird, the secondary cookery, as Mr. Saintsbury calls it, their name is legion. Among them his high opinion of partridge-pudding has given me the greatest satisfaction. He has even the moral courage to declare that to be laid softly on a bed of steak and encased in a becoming crust is no disgrace to a September bird. *Absit ab illo Dedecus hoc Montanus ait;*

but in point of fact, there is nothing which is dishonoured by being put into a pudding. Woodcock-pudding, snipe-pudding, pigeon-pudding are all excellent things, and there comes a time in the life of a partridge, sooner perhaps than is commonly supposed, when he begins to lose his highest flavour, even while still young and before his legs have turned gray. So soon as this sad change sets in, have no hesitation about popping him under the crust. A great deal depends on the food he is able to get after the fields are cleared. So long as he can pick up grain enough he is all right; but when he has to take to any coarser diet—turnips, for instance, or other roots—he begins to fall off, and then the bread-sauce and the bread-crumbs and the fried potatoes and the vine leaves must be exchanged for beef gravy and a cloak of suet.

With most sportsmen the partridge was the first bird at which they were entered. The first bird of gentle blood that fell to my gun was a snipe; but for all that, the partridge awakes the more affecting reminiscences. That leap out of bed at four o'clock on the morning of "the First"; the delight

with which one hailed the sunrise and saw the promise of a fine day; the hasty preparations; the letting out the dogs; the walk across the meadows glittering with the early dew, and the fresh, cool morning air, enough to make a centenarian of the feeblest of us; then over the stile, on to the rising ground again, where lay our first stubble, the wave of the hand and the "hold up" to our white Welsh setter; the first point, the first bird, the varied fortune of the day, the tramp home at dewy eve, and the eager inquiries after our bag which awaited us, as we sat down to have our boots pulled off, from mother, sister, cook, and kitchen-maid, all at once! Much the same thing may have been experienced in grouse-shooting afterwards, but the partridge came first. Can a girl forget her first love, or a boy his first bird? Does not the very thought of it make a man young again, even when his hair is white? May he who is impervious to such sensations never kill another partridge, and perish miserably on the thirty-first of August!

T. E. KEBBEL.